

Jim and Becky – Prologue

“Why do you always insist on hauling all of the extra stuff around?”

“What extra stuff?”

“That bag of emergency supplies.”

“They’re for an emergency. We could be a long way from home when this mess we’re in goes to hell.”

“Sixty years they’ve been talking about World War III, it’s not going to happen, Jim.”

“It almost happened several times, Jenna, dad said we were the closest in 1962.”

“I’m just glad I found out about you before we got married.”

“What are you saying?”

“Here’s the ring back, Jim. I’m sorry; I can’t marry someone who belongs in an institution.”

“I’m sorry you feel that way Jenna. Keep the ring, I bought it for you.”

Jenna threw the ring in the trashcan and walked out.

“Good riddance,” Jim thought retrieving the ring.

Jim and Becky – Chapter 1 – Before

James Stewart Young was only 25 and had gotten out of the service after his tour ended in Iraq, a year earlier. He had a good job working in a food wholesaler's warehouse. He'd been buying bents and dents, cases of food etc. that had been mishandled and damaged in shipment. He'd half-filled his parents basement with an assortment of food that had nothing wrong with it.

"Jim, we're going to have to build a shed to store all of this food in."

"Dad, I'll help, I find myself with a lot of free time, now."

"Jenna?"

"Said I was crazy and threw the engagement ring in the trashcan."

"City girl, Jim. She wouldn't have liked it on the farm anyway. Your mother and I wondered. You don't seem to be very broken up about it."

"It hurts dad, but better we break up before we got married than after. She has no concept of what the world is really like. I didn't either until I saw Iraq."

"Is that why you started buying food?"

"I haven't bought anything we don't normally use. It's a way for me to pay rent to you and mom."

"You ought to save some money; times are going to get tough."

"I have, dad. I've been buy 90% silver coins, the food and my weapons. I'll admit that I don't have a lot of cash left over, but a dollar bill isn't worth very much anymore."

"What did you do with the diamond?"

"Traded it for Krugerrands. I got 4 of them to add to my silver. How big of a shed are you planning on building?"

"20'x36'. You get on the tractor and grade a spot level on the other side of the garage. I'll drag out the used 2x4s that I keep for forms. We can form it up today and we'll use the mixer to put in the slab tomorrow. If we let it cure a week, we can build the shed next Saturday. I'll build the trusses for the roof during the week."

"Do you have shingles?"

"I have some used galvanized sheets. We'll do the entire building with it, there's more than enough. We'll use that used steel door I have in the barn."

“We’ll have to heat it or the food will freeze, dad.”

“I thought maybe we just store the dry goods and keep the canned goods in the basement, Jim.”

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“Mom had so much she thought that you would like to share,” Becky explained.

“Thanks, Becky and thank your mother. Like a glass of lemonade?”

“Thank you. What are they working on next to the garage?”

“John and Jim are building a shed to hold all of the dry goods that Jim has been picking up at work.”

“I figured Jim would be off on a date.”

“You haven’t heard, have you? Jim and Jenna broke up. She told him he was crazy being prepared for an emergency. Tossed her engagement ring in the trash and walked out on him.”

“Do you think the men would like lemonade too?”

“Probably, they’ve been at it since the crack of dawn. You carry the glasses and I’ll bring the pitcher.”

“Lemonade?”

“Oh, hi Becky, what brings you by? Lemonade sounds good.”

“Mom had too much macaroni salad and I brought a bowl by for you guys.”

“Hi Becky.” John said. “Take a 30 minute break, Jim, we’re ahead of schedule.”

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“Your mom said that Jenna and you broke up.”

“She said that I belonged in an institution.”

“Why because you’re prepared for a downturn in the economy?”

“Or something worse.”

“I think it is just good sense to be ready before something happens. Iran told the Europeans no thanks and is going ahead with their nuclear program. North Korea is out of the talks again. Daddy says that there is a major war looming just below the surface.”

“So how have you been, still seeing the fella from town?”

“I dumped him a long time ago. Maybe he can hook up with Jenna. Jim, *War of the Worlds*, moved to the discount theater, would you like to go with me to see it?”

“How about next Saturday afternoon after we finish moving the stuff from the basement to the shed?”

“I can come by and help you move things to the shed, if you wouldn’t mind.”

“Not at all, Becky, there are a lot of bulky packages that aren’t heavy. Toilet paper, paper towels and stuff like that.”

“Is 8 am too late?”

“No, we have a lot of heavy things to move. I’ll see you at 8am next Saturday. Bring a change of clothes and we’ll get something to eat after the movie.”

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“I don’t understand why you never dated Becky, Jim. She level headed, good looking and hard working.”

“I never really thought about it, dad. Becky and I are just friends.”

“So were your mother and I. I about screwed the pooch and let her get away.”

“She’s a whole lot different from Jenna, I can tell you that. I can’t recall ever being asked out on a date before. We going to the movies and dinner next Saturday after we have everything moved to the shed. Becky is coming by to help.”

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“That’s the last of it Jim. I swear, you have enough paper products for a year.”

“Beats the heck out of the Sears catalog. Let’s get cleaned up and head to town. We should be able to get there for the 2pm showing.”

“What was in the pails?”

“Some have flour or wheat berries. I put pasta, rice and beans in others. If a large package of flour gets ripped, the boss sells off the package at a fraction of his cost. The

same thing goes for the other food. Most times there's nothing wrong with the other packages in the bundle. We bought the 6-gallon pails and oxygen absorbers to store the food for long-term need. The canned goods are being used up as we get them, but I don't really buy too many of those."

"I'll run through the shower and get dressed."

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"I like the original movie with Gene Barry better," Jim observed. "This wasn't bad, but the plot left a lot to be desired. Black Angus ok for dinner?"

"Sure. We'll be early, won't we?"

"Uh huh, but we won't have to wait in line. Gene Barry and Ann Robinson were in this one too, that helped a little."

"Your mom told me you bought a new rifle."

"New to me, but it's used. It was a M1A with a problem. It only took a couple of parts to get it into working order. The guy that had it first replaced the barrel with a chrome-lined barrel but didn't replace the springs or the op rod. That's about all it took. I've got the M1A and a M16A3 that has a semi-auto sear."

"Can it be converted back to full auto?"

"I just have to put the auto sear back in."

"What else do you have for weapons?"

"A used police riot gun, Remington, and a .22 rifle. I had the dealer go through the riot gun and it's like new."

"Will you take me shooting some time?"

"I didn't know that you shot."

"Since I was 12 years old. Don't you have any handguns?"

"I'm saving up for one. It's hard with my other savings program and buying the food."

"What other saving program?"

"I spend 25% of my take home pay on 90% silver coins. I've been doing that since I got out of the Army. Mom and dad don't charge me any rent and I've been buying the food

as a means to repay them. I think I may stop buying silver and switch to gold one of these days.”

“Some woman is going to marry you for your money. What kind of handgun are you saving up for?”

“A Kimber Custom TLE II.”

“I have 2 Colt Gold Cup Trophy’s.”

“I didn’t know that, what else do you have?”

“Daddy bought me a STG58A Austrian FAL Rifle. I have a Remington 20-gauge Express combo and a Winchester 9422 rifle.”

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Becky had a better or equal gun collection to his. She hadn’t said anything about a 5.56x45mm caliber rifle, but if she had a FAL and a pair of pistols, Gold Cup Trophy’s, no less, she was a step up on Jim. They made a date to go shooting the following weekend. Becky was a far better shot than Jim, except for the M16. After they got done shooting, Jim’s mother, Glenda, invited Becky to stay for dinner, pot roast and spuds with onions and carrots. Jim was being managed and didn’t even realize it, or, if he did, didn’t care.

It wasn’t a whirlwind romance. But slowly, Jim opened his eyes, looked at Becky and realized that he’d have to look the rest of his life to find someone half her equal. The wedding the following June in Reno was well attended. Once he’d taught her to shoot the M16, she was better with it than he, was much to his chagrin. John and Glenda were thinking of retiring and suggested that Jim and Becky move in with them until their new house in town was finished. Jim could rent the farm from his dad, with one proviso – when TSHTF dad and mom were coming back to the farm. A man can spend his whole life looking for the perfect woman, but often she’s standing right there. And, if he marries a friend, he has the world by the tail.

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“Are you still saving for the Kimber?”

“I don’t see the need, Becky. I’d rather spend the money on something else. I stopped buying gold and silver; we need the money for our bills. Thank God we don’t need to run air conditioning.”

“So what are you going to buy instead?”

"I thought we'd just save the money until we saw something that we needed. If we have kids, they're going to be expensive, aren't they?"

"Not so bad, you have insurance. We'll get all kinds of clothes from our parents and I don't have any problem with them wearing used, do you?"

"I suppose not, I wore hand me downs. Jeb and Mandy said they'd try to get out this summer to visit. I'm going to get back and finish up that power system. I have the General Motors alternator and once that's installed, we'll have 60 amps of power. It will charge those golf cart batteries and if we lose electricity we can take the power from the inverter."

"How many batteries do we have?"

"Not a lot, but enough to handle a brief power outage. All we have to keep going is the refrigerator and freezer and they can take turns."

"Why don't you take the money for the Kimber and buy extra batteries?"

"I rather buy a second 5kw inverter and get our capacity to 10kw. I could spend the extra money on a battery, I suppose. Those deep cycle/starting marine batteries are so expensive."

"I thought you were buying regular deep cycle batteries."

"I was, but their life is only half the life of the marine battery."

"And the price is less too, Jim. Since battery life is based on cycles, I think you should stick with what you've been buying. Why buy a \$1,200 battery when an \$80 battery will do?"

"Ok, sweetheart, 1 inverter and 8 more batteries. Do you want to ride in town with me?"

"Are you going to Verdi or Reno?"

"Reno."

"I need a few things from Costco, I'll ride along."

Becky was from California, just a few miles away. Their farm/ranch butted up against the California state line to the west and was located in the general area of Fleish, NV. Full name Rebecca Jean Baker Young, and the same age as Jim, 27 now. The two of them knew each other from church. She was a registered nurse who worked at St. Mary's Hospital in Reno. Becky's dad had bought her FAL in Reno because he sure as hell couldn't buy it in California. Her father, Ted, and mother, Sally, had a farm that was half in Nevada and half in California. Both had Nevada driver's licenses because their

house was on the Nevada side of the line. These days, it didn't pay to live in California; everything was illegal on Ted's back 40.

"Do you think that's a big enough box of pads?" Jim kidded. "I was hoping you wouldn't need any for about 9 months."

"Maybe I won't but they won't spoil will they?" Becky laughed.

"I suppose not. This will give us 24 300-amp hour batteries. It should give us enough power for an 8 hour outage, minimum; less if we conserve power."

"How long will it take them to charge?"

"About 40 hours, everything else is charged."

"How many alternators could we run off the windmill?"

"Quite a few I suppose why?"

"I was thinking we should add more. If we had a long-term power outage, one alternator wouldn't keep the batteries charged. The furnace blower motor, the refrigerator and the freezer all use about 800 watts, I checked. However, they use up to 2kw to start."

"The well pump takes twice as much, honey, 1,500 watts. Besides, we have the generator if power is down too long."

"No way do we have enough fuel for a long term power outage."

"What do you propose that we do about that?"

"We could put in a bigger tank."

"Becky, they run about \$2 a gallon. Dad's generator is a 15kw and burns anywhere from 0.6gph at 25% power to 1.4gph at full power. "

"Daddy has a 1,500-gallon skid tank just sitting there. I sure he'd let us have it if I asked, would that be big enough?"

"Absolutely. That would give us about 2½ months continuous run time at 50% power. I can't believe he'd just give it to you."

"You wait until you have your own daughter before you start making assumptions like that."

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“Did you get the tank hooked up?”

“Yes, it’s plumbed in and all we need is fuel.”

“How about I take half of each paycheck and buy fuel until we get it filled?”

“If we can afford it. It’s over \$3 a gallon.”

“How are you powering the fuel pump?”

“It coming off of the batteries that the windmill is charging. I could only run 2 alternators off the windmill. Still, that gives us 120 amps or 1,440 watts of charging power.”

“By the way, you were right, I didn’t need the stuff I bought at Costco, Daddy.”

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Becky was 4 months along before she had the fuel tank filled. Jim bought 8 additional batteries and stopped. He started to buy gold and silver coins because in 2006 inflation was the worst it had been in years. Bush had started pulling troops out of Iraq, finally, but no one could tell if the US had accomplished its goal or he was doing the politically expedient thing. The latest AP poll showed that less than 30% of the population approved of our continued presence in Iraq. He was still trying to get the Senate to confirm his Supreme Court appointment. Since Chief Justice Rehnquist had died, he now had two conservative appointments to the US Supreme Court before the Senate, Roberts and Gonzales. Roberts’s approval was held up when Bush refused to supply papers from Roberts’s tenure with the government, citing attorney-client privilege. As displeased as the population was with Bush’s record in Iraq, they were even angrier with the Democrats in the Senate and their tactics holding up Supreme Court nominations.

Iran, as noted, turned down the European offer and was now admitting that they had enough weapons grade enriched uranium to produce 3-4 weapons although they denied having the weapons. North Korea hadn’t returned to the bargaining table and was now claiming they had more than a dozen nuclear weapons. The general sentiment in the US was that we should cut our losses and get out of Iraq before it turned into another Vietnam.

China had continued to deploy the CSS-6 and CSS-7 missiles across from Taiwan and now had nearly 1,000 deployed. Ahead of expectations, China had successfully tested an extended range DF-31A and a new submarine-launched ballistic missile, the JL-2. China also had 12 Kilo class submarines, 6 Sovremenny-class guided missile destroyers, 2 Song-class diesel electric submarines designed to carry the YJ-82, an encapsulated ASCM capable of submerged launch. Finally, they had acquired an additional 40 Backfire C bombers.

In response to the continued buildup of Chinese forces, the US had sold Taiwan additional PAC-III systems. It seemed apparent to more than one reporter on Capitol Hill that Taiwan intended to rely on the US if China did anything against it. This could include a blockade of the Formosa Strait, a direct attack or even a full Naval blockade of the island.

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Special Report by ABC News:

Over the years China has invested a much smaller amount of resources (although not necessarily a much smaller proportion of its resources) to developing and deploying nuclear weapons than any of the top four nuclear countries (US, Russia, France and Britain). The estimated number of nuclear weapons in service with the PLA varies from 300 to 2,350. The vast majority of China's nuclear-capable missiles are land-based, and much of China's nuclear delivery system modernization has been in this area.

China is currently upgrading all classes of its nuclear ballistic missiles, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Beijing intends this program to improve its nuclear deterrence by increasing the number of warheads that can target the United States and augmenting the nuclear force's operational capabilities for contingencies in East Asia. China has replaced all of its early variant DF-5 (CSS-4) ICBMs with the longer range CZ-5A. China has deployed a small number of the DF-31 (CSS-9) 8,000km+ range, solid-fuel, road-mobile ballistic missile introduced in the 1990s, and is currently developing two follow-on versions: an ICBM version DF-31A with an extended range of 10,000km+, and a solid-propellant submarine-launched ballistic missile the JL-2 (CSS-N-2). There is also evidence showing that China is developing the MIRV capability for the DF-31A and JL-2 to improve their strike capabilities.

At the same time, the PLA Second Artillery Corps is continuing to supplement its ageing inventory of liquid-propellant CZ-3 (CSS-2) intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM) with the solid propellant, road-mobile DF-21 (CSS-5) medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM). The 7,000km-range DF-4 (CSS-3) was reported upgraded to 8,000~10,000km range under the name of CZ-1D (DF-4 copy) space launch vehicle project. The improved missile had been deployed in "ready-to-launch" status in silos.

Early reports suggested that China might only have about 20 DF-4s, 25 DF-5s, and several (less than 10) DF-31s. However, some other sources indicated that by 2000 the PLA Second Artillery Corps could have deployed eight ICBM brigades, including three DF-5 brigades, three DF-4A brigades and two DF-31 brigades, each brigade with 12 ICBMs, giving the total number of ICBM in China's inventory 96.

Additionally, China is known to have deployed 12 single-warhead JL-1 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) on a single Type 092 (Xia class) nuclear missile submarine (SSBN). China is also developing a newer JL-2 on the basis of the DF-31. The missile will be carried by the Type 094 nuclear missile submarine (SSBN) currently

under construction. The JL-2, which is believed to also have MIRV warheads, has an estimated range of 8,000km. This would allow the submarine to strike America and Europe from waters close to Chinese coasts. A Type 094 SSBN can carry up to 16 JL-2 missiles, with 48 to 96 MIRV warheads.

ABC News was close, but didn't know that China had already launched 2 of the Type 094 submarines. China deployed the submarines in late 2006 and in December 2006, and began a Naval blockade of Taiwan. Peter Jennings could have explained it better.

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"Becky we have to do something with the basement, it isn't a very good shelter the way it is."

"I can't help much being 5 months pregnant, Jim. What are you talking about, a bomb shelter?"

"When Taiwan asks for our help, the US will be under an obligation to do something about the People's Republic. This thing could very easily go nuclear."

"Is reinforcing the basement the best idea that you can come up with?"

"No, but it may be all we can afford. Ideally, I'd get 4 50' sections of used 12' corrugated culvert and form them into a square. I center them on the well house and move the generator into a separate shelter near the center. I could tap directly off the well water in the bottom of the hole where the wellhead and pump are. The septic system is far enough downhill that if I didn't go more than 12' deep, I could tie into it. I'll call my dad and talk to him about it."

"When you're done, I call mine."

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"You want to do what?" John asked.

"Build a bomb shelter, Dad. To do it, I need 200' of 12' culvert in 50' sections. Used culvert would work and I could tar it good on the outside. The water table isn't a problem."

"I know where we can get the culvert; they have some at the scrap yard. How are you going to excavate the hole? From what they're saying on CNN, this might need to be done fast, Jim."

"Becky was going to talk to Ted about that."

"I'll stop at the store to pick up a few things and you're mother and I will be out after I stop by the scrap yard and buy the culvert. I pay them to deliver it."

“Sweetheart, tell your Dad that my Dad is getting the culvert and will have it delivered. I’ll put on a big pot of something for supper and you take it easy.”

“Aren’t you going to work?”

“It’s Sunday.”

“Oh. Well I’ll call Daddy.”

“Anyway Daddy, John is supplying the culvert. Doesn’t that guy in Truckee owe you a favor? He has the equipment to do the excavation.”

“I can’t reach him until tomorrow, Becky. I’ll call him and see what he can do.”

“Jim put on a big pot of something, why don’t you and mom drive on over and have dinner with us? John and Glenda will be here too.”

“Can he cook?”

“He’s getting better. I think maybe he’s making a pot of his flaming chili.”

“Tell him to make some cornbread and we’ll be there.”

“Bye, Daddy.”

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“Did you put extra chilies in this?”

“Too hot?”

“I brought my Maalox. If you put those four pipes together like you’re proposing, you’re going to lose floor space. Why not run 3 of them parallel and put the 4th across the end to use as a common area? You could put the fuel tank and the generator in the common culvert and avoid digging a separate hole.”

“Are all 4 of the culverts 50’ long?”

“He didn’t have any of the 50’ culverts, these are 60’ long, why?”

“I read an article on culvert shelters and you have to leave a space equal to their diameter between each culvert. That means if I took your suggestion, they’d span 60’. The downside of your proposal is that we’d have to come up with 6 end plates for the culverts. Since the culvert is 60’ long, the short side would still be 48’ and we wouldn’t need to worry about end plates. Who can we get to weld the 4 sections together?”

“There’s no shortage of welders in Reno. I brought several 5-gallon pails of tar, too. How long do you figure it will take to get this shelter put together?”

“John, if I can get my friend to excavate the hole, he will need 2 days to do that. It’s going to take a day to put the tar on the culverts too. If we can get enough welders, they might have the seams welded in 2 days,” Ted replied. “Jim, how much rock are we going to need?”

“I have no idea, more than 100 yards.”

“What about an air purifier and a blast door?”

“Utah Shelter Systems and American Safe Rooms sells them. They have web sites.”

“I’ll call them tomorrow and if it will take too long to deliver them, go after them.”

“I can’t climb down some ladder,” Becky advised.

“Ask them about their optional winch, Ted. We’re going to need to move the batteries into the shelter under the floor and pull the alternators in case we get EMP. Becky and I have 1,500 gallons of diesel fuel for your generator, dad.”

“It sounds like we have our work cut out for us. I going to cash out my 401K and transfer it into precious metals. What the supply situation for food and the like?”

“We’ve maintained it but haven’t really increased it. 6 months for 6 people.”

“I’ll meet you at Costco north in Reno tomorrow, John. Make it noon, I have to arrange for the excavation. Bring your pickup and trailer,” Ted said.

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“I called in sick, Becky. I told them it would be several days because I had the flu.”

“I hope we’re not going to need this shelter you’re putting in.”

“You and me both. Please call that place in Texas and order their standard package, 6 extra dosimeters, a CD V-717, a CD V-700 and extra Potassium Iodide. Then, call my mom and ask her to have dad send out some guys to cut down the culverts with torches. I’ll start applying the tar.”

“What culverts? They’re not here yet are they?”

“They delivered them at 6am while you were really sleeping. I was sure that they’d wake you but you slept through the entire thing.”

“Daddy called, he’s headed to Oregon tomorrow to get what we need for the shelter. How do you want me to have those people ship the equipment from Texas?”

“Two day air. I don’t want to have to worry about those things, they’re too important.”

It takes considerable time to apply tar to seal a surface (personal experience). Later that morning, 4 welders showed up with cutting torches and Jim showed them what he wanted cut. Around 3pm, Ted and John showed up with two pickups and 2 trailers full of food. They unloaded and left to go back to Costco for other things, like toilet paper, and to a gun dealer who sold surplus ammo. Glenda and Sally were with Ted and John and started supper, beef stew. The following day, Tuesday, Ted headed to Utah and John helped Jim apply the tar. The welders finished up their cutting work and John paid them off, but made arrangements for the 4 men to return later to weld the seams together.

The lumberyard delivered the ¾” plywood and 2x4’s that they needed to build the floors in the shelters. One of the welders had tack-welded angle iron on the inside of the culverts to prevent the wood frame from sliding. On Wednesday, FedEx delivered the order from Texas and the 3 men and 2 women finished applying the tar. Ted called his contractor friend to bring a crane the following morning to set 3 of the culverts in place. He also asked his friend to send along a framing crew to build the floors in the shelters so they could place everything inside before they set the 4th culvert in place. Once the culverts were in place, they’d cut a hole in one of them to permit access to the entrance and a second hole for an escape tunnel.

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My fellow Americans,

The People Republic of China has blockaded Taiwan. The government of Taiwan has asked the assistance of the United States, pursuant to Treaties, to break this blockade. I have discussed this matter with the leaders of Congress and we have little choice in the matter. Your government will pursue the following course of action:

1) Any remaining troops stationed outside of the United States, with the except of our forces in Japan are being immediately evacuated and returned home;

2) Our Pacific Naval forces have set sail for the Straits of Taiwan with the intention of breaking the blockade;

3) I have moved the armed forces of this country to a higher state of readiness;

4) Homeland Security has raised the threat level to orange for the nation as a whole and to red with respect to our transportation systems;

5) We are advising all families to accumulate two weeks of food and water;

6) *State Emergency Management agencies are preparing emergency shelters in the event this country is attacked; and,*

7) *I have issued a temporary Executive Order freezing prices at the levels as of the close of business yesterday.*

We advise against hoarding, as this will limit the available foodstuffs in our supply chain. Retails outlets will impose limits on purchases as of tomorrow when they open. This effort is being coordinated through the state agencies.

The people of Taiwan want nothing more than freedom. They have made no effort to secede from China. The Chinese law only permits the government of China to act against Taiwan in the event they vote to secede. As such, the actions of China are in violation of International law and our actions in breaking the illegal blockade are legal.

Thank you and good night. God Bless America.

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“Poop.”

“I’d say that about covers it. Ok, the shelter can be finished by Sunday and back filled. We had them put in the floors in the 3 sections they’re putting in place and then move the freezers, batteries and hook up the plumbing. We should be able to set the 4th section in place by the end of the day. And as soon as they have one seam welded, we’ll seal it with tar. Our freezer in town is full so we’ll move it out here tomorrow. If nothing comes of this, we can buy a new freezer and move the meat back. Ted how are Sally and you fixed for meat?”

“John, we have our freezer full and meat to pick up at the locker plant. I butchered one more steer and 2 hogs. We’re going to butcher chickens tomorrow and if Glenda can help Sally, we can freeze about 100 birds. I have several bags of non-hybrid seed I’ll bring over and store in the shelter, too.”

“I have a doctor’s appointment so I won’t be able to do anything to help. I want each of you to write down any prescriptions you take and the dosages. I try and get the doctor to write a 6-month prescription for each of your drugs and some other things. I can fill them at the hospital pharmacy.”

“Sally I’ll drive down and help with the chickens,” Glenda agreed. “I think we’re going to need another freezer though.”

“I’ll get a second 25 ft³ Sear’s freezer and have them load it on the pickup,” John offered. “Is there anything we’ve overlooked?”

“No, but I hope we have enough time to get everything done, dad.”

“I think we have until the middle of next week before we have to worry, Jim. If we can get it mostly finished up by Sunday night, you might as well go back to work on Monday. Ted, Sally, your mother and I will take care of anything that needs finishing up. I called your brother and they’re on their way.”

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“Feeling better, Jim?”

“Must have been the flu.”

“Right. The word is that you folks have been putting in a shelter out on your dad’s farm. I’m going to have to charge your time off to vacation unless you have a doctor’s excuse.”

“I left it at home; I can bring it in tomorrow.”

“Good. We have some bents and dents and I kept them to give you a shot at them. If you don’t want them, the store said they would take them.”

“What do you have?”

“Sugar, flour, salt, beans, rice and canned vegetables.”

“I’ll take it all to put into my new shelter I don’t have,” Jim smiled.

“Becky, when do you leave for the doctor?”

“About an hour, what’s up?”

“My absence was long enough that I need that doctor’s excuse I left lying on the kitchen table, could you drop it off on your way back from the hospital?”

“Wha... Oh that doctor’s excuse. It’s laying right here, I bring it by.”

“Thanks honey, everything ok?”

“They’re working like beavers.”

“I will be bring home some more bents and dents, do I need pails?”

“I’ll pick some up. How many do you think?”

“I have no idea; you’d better get a dozen and more of the oxygen absorbers.”

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“You backfilled it already? Great. I have more of the bents and dents to transfer to pails. If I didn’t know better I’d say that the boss cut some of those bags himself. They have neat little knife slits and none of the product came out. Everyone at the warehouse ended up with the same allotment. He took the doctor’s excuse you got even though it was dated today. Tomorrow will be my last day of work for a while, the warehouse is nearly empty.”

“I got everyone’s prescriptions from the pharmacy and some other things like antibiotics, morphine, IV solutions, IV sets, syringes and needles and extra bandages. You can do an IV can’t you? You were a Combat Lifesaver.”

“I might be a little rusty, but I can manage sweetheart. What about the baby, I was never trained to deliver a baby?”

“Babies, I’m having twins. I have a checklist of steps that need to be taken when our babies are born. The doctor said that he hoped there weren’t any other complications and I picked up OB kits at the pharmacy so we have everything we need.”

“What complications? And what did you get for IV supplies, the only thing I ever used was Ringer’s.”

“Ringer’s, 2 cases, D5W and normal saline, 1 case each, plus a very few IV antibiotics, in case someone is seriously hurt. Can you use the stuff?”

“Some of it, but I’m sure you can explain the rest, right?”

“I can later. The doctor discovered a very minor placental abruption. I had a little spotting. I know it’s only 6 months into my pregnancy, and it was why I was so late getting to your work.

“What’s a very minor placental abruption?”

“Premature separation of the placenta. He says I’ll have to take it easy to prevent a premature delivery. We need to get the pregnancy to at least 7 months, if possible. It is the premature separation of the placenta from the uterine wall. Placental abruption affects 1 out of every 200 pregnancies. Harm to the baby is based on the severity of the abruption and whether or not the baby is delivered prematurely. With swift suitable treatment, maternal death is less than 1 percent. Abruption may reoccur 10 percent of the time with a subsequent pregnancy.

“As you already know, the placenta implants on the uterine wall during pregnancy and is connected with many intertwining blood vessels. These blood vessels maintain their working status until the baby is delivered. Once the baby is delivered the placenta will

release itself, the connecting vessels will close and recede back into the uterine lining, and bleeding will taper off.

“With a placental abruption some or many large blood vessels are ruptured between the placenta and the uterine wall. Once this happens bleeding can occur quickly and in large amounts. A collection of blood accumulates between the placenta and the uterus and then forces the placenta to further separate from the wall of the uterus. This can be life threatening for both mother and baby.”

“You can forget about the sex, we can’t run any risks.”

“The cause of abruption is truly unknown, but there are many conditions highly associated with placental abruption. Conditions that increase the risk of abruption include chronic hypertension, smoking, toxemia, and having either twins or triplets. Other risk factors include having too much amniotic fluid (polyhydramnios), having a short umbilical cord, or using any form of cocaine. Experiencing trauma during pregnancy can also increase the risk of abruption. Examples of trauma can include a motor vehicle accident, a fall, or being a victim of physical abuse. Unfortunately, the belly is often a primary target for a batterer, and abruption may result from being hit, kicked, or stabbed in the abdomen. Since those didn’t apply to our situation, he did an ultrasound even though they aren’t usually revealing. This one was, we’re having a boy and a girl. He had no explanation why he missed two heartbeats. Since I didn’t have much bleeding, he just increased my prenatal vitamins because of twins, told me to discontinue sexual activity and insisted on bed rest. I was late getting home because they kept me under observation. He said the separation was minor at this point and could be related to the twins. However, I am on total bed rest for the next 4 weeks.”

“Our mothers can take care of you tomorrow and after I won’t be working so I can take care of us as well. Twins, wow, and one of each, double wow! You get to bed and I’ll call everyone and give them the news. I can’t understand your complacency.”

“It is a really minor abruption at this point, Jim. If it were otherwise, he’d have never let me leave the hospital. I’m going to bed and you’ll have to get the things out of my trunk. I’ll be ok as long as I’m in bed.”

◦

The pregnancy was classified at high risk only if there were subsequent bleeding. Because of the bed rest, that probably wouldn’t occur. Try to explain that to a very nervous expectant father. An hour later, the house was filled with company that wouldn’t leave for the foreseeable future. Maybe it was just as well; the news on the TV wasn’t good. Beijing had warned the US against interfering with the blockade. Jeb and Mandy arrived later during the evening. Mandy was 9 months pregnant and the world was on the very edge of a possible war. The following day, they nearly had to toss Jim out of the house to get him to go to work.

“You look upset, is anything wrong, Jim”

“Becky is confined to bed for 4 weeks, she has a minor problem with her pregnancy. We’re going to have twins, a boy and a girl. I guess I’m just worried. My brother got in last night with his wife Mandy. She’s 9 months along with her first too. But, they did get the shelter that we don’t have finished except for some inside work.”

“The government is coming down hard on the food thing. Do you have enough?”

“Can you ever have enough food? What’s your shelter situation?”

“I have a very good shelter and plenty of food as you might well imagine. So, you could have 3 children soon, how are you on baby foods and diapers?”

“Well, we have more than enough cloth diapers, thanks. I’ll need to get some baby food though.”

“Did you bring you pickup?”

“Yep and my trailer. I’m going shopping after work.”

“You won’t be able to get much. Hey Carl, fill up Jim’s pickup with baby formula and his trailer with baby foods. Give him the same assortment I gave everyone else times 3. They’re going to have twins and his pregnant sister is visiting.”

“I can’t pay for that much baby food.”

“Neither could anyone else. It isn’t really that much to begin with so call it a severance package. We won’t be open for at least 2 weeks because I can’t get any shipments. I’ll call when we get more food in and you can come back to work. Would you mind if I pay you in silver coins? The dollar won’t be worth much if TSHTF.”

“I’m already married or I’d propose. Silver would be better than perfect.”

“You’d better take off now; they raised the national threat level to red this morning.”

“Call me when you need me.”

The boss was glued to the small TV screen and didn’t even look up, just waived. Jim hurried home as fast as he dared. He was worried about Becky and wanted to get the baby food put away before some idiot detonated a nuclear weapon somewhere in the world. Becky was fine when he got home, better than Mandy who was in labor and dilated to 7cm. Ted and John helped Jim add the baby food to the stores in the shelter.

The shelter was finished and ready to occupy. They had left a 7’ ceiling and had 4½’ of storage beneath the floor, which was about 10’+ wide. They had more than 2,000 ft² of

floor space for 8 adults and, eventually, 3 babies. Everything was stored beneath the floors, leaving most of the free space unencumbered. There was only enough food in the house for 2 days and the contents of the shed were stored below ground too.

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“Who do you want to watch, to scare us to death, on TV tonight?”

“Aaron Brown, he’s pleasant to listen to even if it is CNN.”

...contingent of American troops departed the Middle East late this afternoon. The last contingent of American troops departed South Korea yesterday. With the drawdown of American troops around the world, the only troops the US has stationed anywhere outside of the United States are those in Japan at Yokosuka. Lincoln, Constellation, Vinson, Nimitz, Stennis and the Reagan are steaming to join the Kitty Hawk, which is station keeping 200 miles east of Taiwan. The ships have been deployed without amphibious.

UN Ambassador John Bolton called upon the UN Security Council to censure China for the blockade of Taiwan which is entering its 6th day. China stated that it would ignore any Resolution that didn’t allow the People’s Republic to have the right of self-determination.

Protests increased today in Germany over the German Chancellor’s decision to support the position of the US in the conflict over Taiwan. A crowd estimated to be at least 50,000 picketed the Reichstag building in Berlin. In contrast to previous instances Germany and France were in total disagreement. France introduced its own Resolution in the UN Security Council calling for condemnation of the US in pursuing a reckless course with respect to challenging the blockade of Taiwan.

o

“It’s a boy, about 7 pounds. Congratulations Jeb.”

“How’s Mandy doing?”

“Exhausted and sleeping. I’ll let you know when she’s awake.”

“Had you decided on a name, Jeb?”

“If it was a boy David John.”

“A salute to David John Young.”

“Did you get more beer today?”

“A pickup load of longnecks. Figured that if things went to hell we could bottle our own beer.”

“I hope you bought caps too.”

“I bought enough of everything to last until we can get some more.”

“How long do you figure it will take the Navy to get to Taiwan?”

“It’s about 6,000 nautical miles and the carriers should be able to make 30 knots, a little over 8 days.”

“Then they should be rendezvousing soon.”

Jim and Becky – Chapter 2 – During Part 1

American Naval forces assembled in an area about 200 miles east of Taiwan during the early morning hours. President Bush gave the People's Republic of China one final opportunity to remove their blockade of Taiwan. President Hu Jintao flatly rejected the American overture and ordered their UN and American Ambassadors to return to Beijing. He also ordered American Embassy personnel ejected from China. A Pentagon source revealed that the US military raised its status to DEFCON 2 at 6am this morning, Washington time.

There have been long lines at grocery stores while people attempt to buy the minimum 2 weeks' worth of food and water President Bush advised the public to have. Stores have limited each family to a maximum purchase of \$150. Membership stores like Costco and Sam's Club have waived membership requirements and have prepackaged food available for the maximum amount. CNN correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta visited a Sam's Club and examined their offering. Dr. Gupta, how adequate is that food supply?

Aaron, the package consists of pasta, beans, rice, coffee, sauces, canned vegetables, potato flakes, canned meat products, fruit drinks and multivitamins. While the diet would undoubtedly get boring quickly, it would be enough food to feed a family of 4 for a period of 14 days. Any deficiencies in the diet are addressed by the multivitamins included. One advantage to this package is that one only needs water and a source of heat to prepare the meals. However, without a means to heat water, the food would be difficult to prepare. It is a reasonable value and probably costs a bit less than if one were to buy the products separately.

Thank you Dr. Sanjay Gupta. We'll return in a few moments.

"Sounds good to me, beans rice and coffee. That ought to tide people over if we end up being attacked."

"It occurs to me that it might be a good idea to move Becky, Mandy and David to the shelter. If anything were to happen during the night, we wouldn't have a lot of time to move them," Ted suggested.

"How are you feeling?"

"I haven't spotted any more so it appears that I'm going to be ok. What's up?"

"The usual. The American Naval carrier strike groups linked up east of Taiwan. Bush gave the Chinese a final ultimatum and they pulled all of their diplomats. They also ejected the American diplomats from Beijing. You dad suggested that we move you and Mandy to the shelter. He's concerned that if something happens during the night we might not have sufficient time to move you. We've rigged up a chair lift and can lower you with that winch. I know I'd feel better if you were down below and we didn't have to worry about you."

“What about the rest of you?”

“One of us will be up all night keeping an eye on the news.”

“This might be a good time; I’m feeling a lot better for the time being. Tell Daddy ok.”

“Ted, Becky is agreeable. We’d better get her moved before she changes her mind. Why don’t we have all of the women stay in the shelter and the 4 of us can take turns keeping up with the news?”

“If they agree, fine.”

“I don’t see why I have to go down in the shelter,” Sally complained.

“Becky is going to be there and so is Mandy and David. Glenda is going down to keep an eye on Mandy and you need to go in case Rebecca needs something. We take turns keeping up with the news and be down if anything happens. Otherwise, we’ll put together something for breakfast and spell you to come up and eat when it’s ready.”

“If you insist, ok. Where is my suitcase, I need my nightgown?”

“I’ll bring it down to you.”

o

“How long do you intend that they stay in the shelter?”

“It all depends on what happens when the Chinese Navy and our Navy square off. If nothing comes of it, I think we should bring them topside. Do you agree John?”

“Ted, we should know in a few hours one way or the other. I can’t believe that the Chinese Navy and Air Force would take on 7 carrier strike groups and maybe 300+ F/A-18 fighters. I read that they had about 400 aircraft within strike range of Taiwan. It didn’t say how many of those had legs long enough to reach to our fleet.”

“Their J-10s have a combat radius of 550km, not enough to reach the US fleet and engage in combat without refueling.”

“What about ICBMs?”

“The only things they might have with the range would be the D-5As and DF-31As with an estimated range of 10-11,000km.”

“Why might, do they have them or not?”

"I don't really know. They have the DF-31 with a range of 8,000km, but the DF-31A was reported to be under development."

"Who is going to bed and who is staying up?"

"I take the midnight to 2am shift," Jim offered. "Jeb are you good with 2am to 4am?"

"Suits me."

"Ted you and dad can decide on the next 2 shifts. If someone will wake me up around 7am, I'll throw together pancakes and bacon."

"Ted?"

"You're choice, John."

"I wake you at 6am."

o

This just in, American carrier based aircraft engaged Chinese land based aircraft within the last hour just north of Taiwan. Sources indicate a pitched air battle resulting in the loss of 4 American aircraft. Aviators' claimed approximately 50 Chinese aircraft were shot down. A Chinese launched ship missile was destroyed by a US guided missile destroyer and the launching vessel heavily damage by a Harpoon missile. CNN has learned that the American fleet includes 7 guided missile cruisers and 10 guided missile destroyers. An unknown number of Oliver Hazard Perry class frigates slated for retirement also accompanied the fleet. These vessels are primarily used for anti-submarine warfare. Four US C-5M Galaxy aircraft are reported to have delivered additional PAC-III batteries to the Taiwanese.

In other news, police killed 6 people who broke into a Sam's Club, apparently seeking food. Officers responding to the silent alarm were fired upon when they arrived. LAPD SWAT and other officers surrounded the building. About an hour after the standoff began, the 6 men made a break for it out of the loading dock door. They were killed when they refused to surrender to officers. An LAPD representative told reporters that the men were armed with full auto Russian AK-47s.

"It's 2am big brother."

"Give me a minute, Jim. Is there any coffee?"

"Fresh pot."

"Any news?"

“We had our first engagement with the Chinese. We lost 4 aircraft and they lost 50. We also damaged one of their ships. There was a shootout in LA at a Sam’s Club and the cops killed 6 guys. I’m going to check on Becky and will just bunk in the shelter tonight.”

o

Becky awoke to answer a call of nature and saw Jim sleeping in the bunk above her. She tried to be quiet, but bumped a chair upon her return awakening him.

“How are you feeling?”

“No more spotting, good so far. Any news on TV?”

“The Chinese and we had a fight; mostly aircraft and we had fewer losses than they did. Some guys got killed trying to raid a Sam’s Club in LA.”

“A cup of tea would taste good.”

“Give me a minute and I’ll boil some water. Lipton ok?”

“Fine, one lump.”

They had a GE electric kettle that would heat 4 cups of water to boiling in 4 minutes. Jim made Becky tea and a cup of hot chocolate for himself. He added a teaspoon of sugar to her tea and sat down to visit while they drank their drinks.

“No pain or anything?”

“I had a tiny bit when I went to the doctor, but none now.”

“We were discussing the situation last night after we herded you ladies into the shelter. The consensus was that if this thing doesn’t escalate all out of proportion, you should be able to come back topside in a day or two. CNN said that the country has been at DEF-CON 2 since 6am this morning, Washington time.”

“What does that translate to in the real world?”

“Missiles primed, aircraft loaded with weapons and if someone hiccups, nuclear war.”

“I hoped that we would never have to use our preparations. Not like this anyway.”

“I think it was inevitable. The Chinese have increased their manufacturing capacity very rapidly producing goods for export. They are the second largest consumer of imported petroleum products in the world. That’s the chink in their armor, no pun intended. It would be easy for a foreign nation to blockade the route the tankers take to get oil to them from the Middle East. Modern armies run on gas and diesel.”

“Do you believe that we’re going to have a nuclear war?”

“We won’t start it, but I can promise you that the US and Russia will finish it. China and Russia share a 3,645 km border. Sitting in between is Mongolia, which has a 4,677 km border with China and a 3,543 km border Russia. China is large, 9,326,410 km² of land. But adding Mongolia would mean adding another 1,564,116 km² of land. Russia, by contrast, is 16,995,800 km². For years, Russia provided the Mongolians with about ⅓ of their GDP and according to the CIA Fact Book is still Mongolia’s largest trading partner.”

“What does that have to do with us?”

“Directly, nothing. Indirectly, it would give the Chinese and Russians a reason to fight each other. No one has any idea what George and Vladimir might have cooked up to handle the present situation. Most of Russia is within range of the existing Chinese IC-BMs while the continental US is only at risk from their D-5A and DF-31A, assuming they’ve built some, and those three SSBN’s they built.”

“But we’re at risk?”

“Assuming we can’t sink their boomers, yes and if they do have the DF-31As, more. However, we have SOSUS and no doubt the west coast has several attack subs protecting it. You do realize that Japan and Russia never signed a peace treaty formally ending WW II, don’t you?”

“What? That war ended in 1945.”

“The sovereignty dispute over the islands of Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan, and the Habomai group, known in Japan as the Northern Territories and in Russia as the Southern Kurils, occupied by the Soviet Union in 1945, which are now administered by Russia, and claimed by Japan, remains the primary sticking point to signing a peace treaty formally ending World War II hostilities. Moreover, Japan has been talking about going nuclear for 4 or 5 years.”

“Is the entire world crazy?”

“Most of it, yes. More tea?”

“I’m going to get some more sleep.”

“Good night, Becky,” Jim said kissing her.

◦

“Hello the hole, breakfast is here.”

Sally and Glenda took the cooler Ted lowered on a rope. Jim got up, hit the head, washed up and joined the 4 women at the kitchen table. That what it was too, an old kitchen table that John and Glenda had used when he was a kid and stored in the farmhouse attic when they replaced it.”

“I told them to wake me so I could fix breakfast.”

“Bacon and pancakes isn’t rocket science, Jim. Ted made a pitcher of orange juice too.”

“I think I must have died. I haven’t slept that sound in ages. Becky, how are you this morning?”

“Feeling more human, Jim. The no more bleeding so maybe there’s not too much to be worried about.”

“Damn, I’m too old to climb that ladder many times,” John remarked. “Jim what do Becky and you have for radios?”

“There’s the stereo in the house with an AM/FM tuner, the radios in the vehicles, CB’s in the pickup and car, and my base station.”

“No FRS radios or ham equipment?”

“I’m not a ham and those FRS things have such a short range.”

“Ted and I were discussing communications this morning over breakfast and if we did have trouble, I think we’d need a ham radio, license or not. Ted and I might run into Reno this morning to see what we can find. We’ll bring back some coaxial cable so you can move your base station to the shelter.”

“What happened while I was sleeping?”

“China launched a missile barrage on Taipei. North Korea crossed the DMZ and there is heavy fighting in and around Seoul.”

“Damn, I was hoping the Chinese would back off after we shot down all of those aircraft.”

“It doesn’t appear that they are at the moment. We’ll be back in a few hours. Don’t forget to move the radios.”

o

Ted had been checking the want ads in the paper and had been through the yellow pages looking for radio equipment. They would start at Radio Shack and get CB’s for their two pickups plus the longest-range FRS radios Radio Shack had available. He had

noticed an obituary for a fella who was a ham operator in the previous week's paper. He'd looked up the widow's number and decided that it couldn't hurt to give her a call. She told him that she had sold some of her husband's equipment, the tower and beams, but still had quite a bit she wanted to sell.

"Mrs. Collins?"

"You're Ted Baker?"

"Yes and this is my friend John Young. I'm sorry for your loss, Mrs. Collins. As I told you on the phone, we're looking for some good ham equipment to put in a bomb shelter."

"My husband had a Kenwood TS-2000 radio with the extra frequency. He also had an Ameritron 3CX-800A7 1,500-watt amplifier. I'd have to have \$5,000 cash for the radio and amplifier. I can toss in two vertical antennas, a multiband HF and a triband VHF/UHF antenna."

"You don't happen to have any coaxial cable or antenna switches, do you?"

"Make it \$5,500 and you can have everything."

"Ted, can you help me here, I only have \$3,000 left in cash?"

"\$2,500? Ok, but that's the last of my cash."

"We'll stop at the bank, I want to clean out my savings and most of my checking account."

The bank told John that they couldn't give him more than \$10,000 in cash and he'd have to settle for the remainder in a check. He got 2 checks, one for \$10,000 and the other for \$7,500. He cashed one at one branch and the second at another, giving him \$27,500 in cash. He paid Ted back his \$2,500 and went to a coin dealer and converted \$22,000 into 90% silver coins and Krugerrands, mostly silver.

The ham had 2 39' Radio Shack extending masts that looked like they had never been used. He also had 4 parts cabinets, 300' of RG-8 coax, guy wire, turnbuckles and an assortment of other things including antenna switches, ground rods, a keyer and headphones. They stopped by Wal-Mart and bought a particleboard desk to use for the radio equipment. When they got back the 4 men installed the antennas on the masts, added coaxial connectors to the RG-8 and extended the masts. They had the installation completed by 4pm. Jim had 2 100' spools of RG-8 and had left the CB antenna on top of the house and just extended the antenna feed to the shelter. His equipment was in a pile near where he thought they should set up the equipment. Mandy, David and Becky were going to spend one more night in the shelter and if nothing happened, return to the house.

Rising oil prices and the situation in the Taiwan Straits apparently triggered investor fears causing the markets to slide sharply today. The New York Stock Exchange narrowly avoided suspending trading several times over the course of the day. Gold and silver increased dramatically in response to the market collapse. OPEC announced further production cuts at 1pm Eastern Time citing a failure to increase their proven reserves during the past year's explorations.

There was no further conflict in the Taiwan Straits after the Chinese launched a massive missile barrage against Taipei about 15 hours ago. Several ASW aircraft were seen off the west coast west of San Francisco this afternoon. Pentagon officials described the activity as an exercise. One source told CNN that the exercise involved dropping live torpedoes from LAMPs helicopters and that he doubted they'd do that if it were an exercise.

There has been no further comment from the LAPD concerning the shooting of 6 men who broke into a Sam's Club in Los Angeles and decided to engage in a gun battle with the LAPD SWAT Team. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa issued a statement announcing that all reserve officers would remain on duty for the foreseeable future.

In Berlin, the crowd outside of the Reichstag increased to over 100,000. Elements of the Bundeswehr Heer were brought in to restore order. The Chancellor's office has remained silent. French forces began a 3-day military exercise in the region of France's border with Germany. The exercises, which were announced only last week, caused Germany to initiate a similar military exercise in the region. Both countries are members of NATO however that could change if the German population forces the Chancellor to withdraw from NATO.

"Honey, I have a confession to make."

"Seeing a doctor on the side, are you?"

"No. Back when I came over and you and your dad were building the shed, it wasn't extra macaroni salad. I made it as an excuse to come see you. I had heard that Jenna and you had broken up and since you hadn't called me, I decided to take matters into my own hands."

"I know."

"How could you know that?"

"You never put black olives in your macaroni salad when you make it for home, your dad hates them."

"I thought I was being clever."

“It was very clever, Becky. You got me, didn’t you? I would have been calling you eventually anyway, at least to go to the movies or something. After getting engaged to Jenna, I came to know her better and realized that she wasn’t the woman for me. I also discovered that I was comparing the two of you and you were winning hands down. A marriage that doesn’t include friendship and similar interests would never last. I started emphasizing the survivalist things to make her break the engagement. That doesn’t mean that I was thinking of coming after you, but we were and are friends.”

“And lovers,” Becky said patting her tummy.

“Any more problems?”

“None so far. The doctor said that he wanted to see me in a week, but I think that was just to confirm that it didn’t amount to anything. What’s in that box over there by the radio equipment?”

“Dad and Ted bought a particleboard desk for the radio equipment. I thought I’d wait until tomorrow to assemble it.”

“What happened in the war today?”

“Very little. The Chinese launched a missile barrage against Taipei, but that was the only reported action in Southeast Asia. There was some sort of ASW exercise off the coast near San Francisco. And the French and Germans both began war exercises in the area of their common border. Gold is up and the market is down. I figure the price of gas is going to get a lot higher, OPEC announced production reductions. Do you want me to set up the TV so you can watch something?”

“Please.”

“Ok, I’ll get the set out of our bedroom and bring it down here. It will only take a few minutes.”

“Bring the VHS/DVD player too, if it isn’t too much trouble.”

“Ok. Do you want the movies too?”

“If it wouldn’t be too much trouble.”

o

“Jeb, give me a hand moving the TV out of our bedroom to the shelter. Dad could Ted and you grab the movies?”

“Becky getting bored?”

"I think that everyone is. If we don't have any further developments, maybe they can come up to the house tomorrow. Moving things in and out of the shelter is awkward. We should have come up with something better than what we did as far as coming and going."

"Like what?"

"I'm not sure, maybe an oval culvert connecting the shelter entrance to the basement."

"If you do that, you're going to need a blast door in the basement wall."

"True, but a blast door is nothing more than some steel plates. Couldn't we make something out of one of those road plates the scrap yard delivered?"

"That would take some pretty stout hinges."

"Why couldn't we laminate 3 plates and leave the center one $\frac{1}{2}$ " shorter than the others? We could fill the crack with ball bearings and slide the door."

"After we're done moving things, I'll get some paper and pencil and figure something out, that might just work."

"We could probably dig a trench with a backhoe. All we would need would be 80' of 6' oval culvert. We wouldn't need to weld the culvert; those connectors should be good enough."

o

The following morning the world still wasn't at war and John headed to the scrap yard to get the culvert. Jeb manned the backhoe and began digging the trench and Ted used a saw with a concrete blade to begin the hole in the basement wall. Jim assembled the radio table and connected all of the equipment. He used separate grounding antenna switches, one for the HF antenna, one for the VHF/UHF antenna and a third for the CB antenna. He finished up about the time John got back with the culvert. Ted had completed his sawing on both sides of the hole and was pounding the concrete out of the space.

"I got some used $\frac{3}{4}$ " ball bearings that we can use in that door you want to build. What do you want to do now?"

"Let's get the door built and installed and then start manhandling the culvert into place. Ted can cut a hole in the entrance tunnel to hook in the culvert with a sabre saw."

It was after dark before they had the last culvert section in place and the dirt moved and mounded over the top of the culvert. They laid 2x12s in the bottom of the culvert to make walking easier. Angle iron was used to provide a trough for the door to slide in. It

took several slides back and forth until the grease worked its way out of the ball bearings and the door slide easily.

“What was all of that noise?”

“We built a tunnel between the basement and the shelter, Becky. If you want to sleep in your own bed tonight, I don’t see any problem.”

“Oh thank you. Can I have supper in the house tonight?”

“I don’t see any reason why not, ready to go?”

“Give me your arm.”

◦

This just in. Today in Berlin the protestors stormed the Reichstag pushing passed the Heer protecting the building. The Heer managed to prevent them from reaching the Chancellor, however. In apparent response to the crowds’ demands the Chancellor asked the President to disband Parliament. The previous Chancellor, Schroeder, dissolved Parliament in 2005 and elections were held in September of that year. It is expected that elections could be held as early as March 2007. The Chancellor’s office said she would have a statement tomorrow. The military exercises in France and Germany continued into their second day.

At noon, Washington time, US forces succeeded in reaching Taipei. The carrier strike groups remain at sea, but an Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer and a Ticonderoga class guided missile cruiser made port. Tension remains high in the area.

The US Navy continued its ASW exercises today. The first, an exercise about 180 miles west of San Diego, concluded with the dropping of two separate torpedoes from LAMPS helicopters. The second, 3½ hours later and some 200 miles northeast of the first, concluded with a single torpedo being released. A Navy spokesman said that the operations were routine and a part of the Navy’s continuing training program.

“I’m going to get a shower and crawl into bed, Jim. Would you wash my back? I’m so off balance with the babies, I can’t manage it anymore.”

“Sure, holler.”

◦

Breaking News... The People’s Republic of launched a nuclear-armed IRBM against Taipei just minutes ago. The blast was estimated at 350kT. As reported earlier, two American ships were in port in Taipei. China announced that the attack was in retaliation for the sinking of two of its SSBN’s and a kilo class sub off the American coast dur-

ing the past 2 days. The US Navy has been conducting ASW training operations off the west coast for the past two days. We are going to the White House where President Bush is making an announcement.

...ow Americans,

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the loss of CG-53 USS Mobile Bay and DDG-82 USS Lassen in the unprovoked nuclear strike against Taipei earlier this evening. To the best of our knowledge all hands were lost. The People's Republic of China issued a statement claiming that the attack was in response to the sinking of 3 of its submarines in international waters. The United States Navy has in fact sunk 3 submarines during the past 2 days. All of the submarines were within 200 miles of our coast. Two of those submarines were Chinese SSBN's and were each armed with 16 JL-2 missiles. The third submarine sunk was a kilo class submarine armed with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.

I have been left with no other choice. The United States of America has raised its Defense Condition to level 1 and is replying in kind to the Chinese government. I advise all Americans to take shelter immediately. The Chinese capacity to reach the US with IC-BMs is uncertain. My advisers tell me that at most we may expect 20 strikes from DF-5A missile and 20 strikes from DF-31A missiles.

God Bless America.

"Jim, it's starting we need to get into the shelter immediately."

"What's starting?"

"World War III."

"Jim, I'll dry off. My clothing is in that duffel bag. Take it to the shelter and come back for me; I'll be dressed by then."

"Ok, honey. Damned Chinamen. I hope we kill them all."

"Did you say something?"

"Just bitching, I'll be right back."

"Dad, get the food out of the refrigerator if you would. Ted, please grab that box of food. I'll put this bag in the shelter and come back for Becky. How much time did they say we have?"

"They didn't. It could be anywhere from 25 to 40 minutes. Less if the Chinese have already launched."

“Ok, I’ll be right back.”

“Are you ready?”

“I’m dressed. Who could be ready for something like this?”

“There you go Becky. I’m going back to make sure we didn’t miss anything and will close the basement blast door. Jeb, check the top hatch. Someone turn the TV on and see if there is any news.”

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Mandy was hugging David and silent tears fell from her face. Sally had made coffee and poured it but no one was drinking coffee. Everyone sat and watched the TV news, from New York City. When NYC blinked off, CNN switched to Atlanta and continued their coverage. The Chinese targets included Washington, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, San Diego, Dallas, Detroit, San Francisco, Seattle, FE Warren AFB, Malmstrom AFB, Offutt AFB and Cheyenne Mountain. The only thing they had to worry about southwest of Reno was the fallout from San Francisco.

The United States of America took the opportunity to eliminate the weak point in its Triad, the land based missiles. The President ordered the release of all 500 missiles. The Chinese missiles detonated over empty, closed silos. Russia took the opportunity to eliminate several older weapons systems too. Every major city and every factory in China was targeted. The Russians destroyed the Three Gorges Dam, killing millions. China lies between 18°N and 53°N. The American Fleet sailed to Australia. The continental United States lies between 24°30’N (Florida) and 49°24’N (Minnesota) (Maine: 43°4’N to 47°28’N Minnesota: 43°34’N to 49°23’50.26”N). Ill winds would carry the fallout from China to the US.

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“The westerly winds will bring that fallout from Frisco, won’t they?”

“I think so and it’s only about 175 miles to San Francisco. I think we’re looking at almost 300R. If that’s the case, we could be out of here in 2 weeks. Except of course for Becky, Mandy and David. I think maybe Jeb and I should keep it down too. 300mR would give you 3 times the allowable dose in 120 days if you were exposed to it for 24 hours a day. If 0hr=300R/hr, then, 7hr=30R/hr, 49hr=3R/hr, 343hr=300mR/hr and 2,401hr=30mR/hr.”

“Jim, Becky is asking for you.”

“Sweetheart, are you ok? Did you need something?”

“No, I’m fine. Angry, like you can’t imagine. I hope that Bush turned those Chinese into crispy critters.”

“CNN is speculating that the US launched all of its land-based missiles.”

“How many is that?”

“500 missiles, but anywhere from 1,000 to 1,850 warheads. The 50 Peacekeepers each had 10 and the Minuteman IIIs could have each had from 1 to 3 (actually 1,000 – the MM IIIs were being permanently downsized). They don’t know yet if Russia launched any missiles against China.”

“Is there some hot water for tea?”

“If there isn’t, there will be in 4 minutes. One lump?”

“I changed my mind, make it hot chocolate.”

“Where’s the hot chocolate?”

“In the can, I didn’t want to risk you changing your mind again. I brought that and herbal tea.”

“Give me the chocolate. What’s going to happen now?”

“In general, the radioactive fallout from San Francisco should drift into this area. I’m guessing 300R/hr so it will be safe for everyone to leave the shelter, briefly, in 2 weeks. However, since you’re expecting, I want you to stay here until the radiation level is one ten-thousandth of 300R or 0.03R. I don’t want to risk our babies. I also suggested that Jeb and I limit our exposure to 12 hours a day for the same period.”

“And that’s 14 weeks right?”

“Yep.”

“I’ll stay, but on one condition. When it’s safe, you have to bring our bed down here. These bunks aren’t much for comfort.”

“Sure, when it’s safe. It will probably be 2 weeks. CNN is still broadcasting, but from Atlanta. FOX is off the air and since MSNBC was produced out of newsrooms in Redmond, Washington and Secaucus, New Jersey they’re off the air. I didn’t check the regular networks.”

“Any news on casualties?”

“Not yet. Tens of millions, certainly. CNN says that they nuked 11 of the largest cities. They also attacked SAC Headquarters, NORAD, and the missile bases. Apparently they didn’t have many ICBMs that could reach the US. Jeb told me that Bush announced that

those ASW exercises were actually us sinking China's 2 boomers and a kilo equipped with nuclear cruise missiles."

"What I don't understand is why we didn't just take out Beijing and they launch on Washington."

"The politicians weren't in Washington or Beijing. Jeb said that the President was broadcasting from the White House, but he could have just as easily been broadcasting from Mt. Weather, Crawford, or any one of a number of super secure locations around the country. You can't imagine that Hu was still in Beijing, can you? Honey the guys that push the buttons were safe, it was the population that took it on the chin."

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CNN is able to report the following. New York City was hit with an estimate loss of life in the area exceeding 10 million. Los Angeles 15 million, Chicago, 3 million plus, Houston 3 million, Philadelphia 2 million, San Diego 2 million, Dallas 2 million, Detroit 1.5 million, San Francisco 3 million and Seattle 1 million. The loss of life at the military installations hit by the Chinese is unknown at this hour, but must be in the tens of thousands.

Prevailing winds across the country are westerly carrying the fallout to east of the locations attacked. China also launched nearly 300 missiles at Russia. We do not have an estimate of lives loss in that country and it may be some time before we have the information. Military sources tell CNN that Russia launched over 600 weapons against the Chinese. Combined with the estimated 1,000 warheads launched by the US, I believe it is safe to assume that China was badly, and perhaps fatally, damaged. Informed sources tell CNN that the Chinese nuclear weapons were in the range of 3mT and are expected to affect wide areas, ranging up to 250 miles, possibly further.

French forces crossed the border into Germany during the early morning hours attacking with their Leclerc tanks and Rafale fighters. After a battle that lasted much of the day, the Germans repulsed the French attack and continued to pursue the French forces onto French soil. No estimate of the loss of life is available. Stay tuned for later developments. We'll be back after announcements.

"Why are they running commercials? They're about the only network still on the air and I doubt anyone cares what brand things are so long as they can get something."

"A lot of cities didn't get hit, Jeb. Maybe they're only running commercials for folks in those places."

o

"What day is it?"

"I don't know that the date matters, Becky. As far as the war goes, it's still day zero and will remain so until the radiation level peaks and begins to fall. I set up a spreadsheet to count down 7 hours, 49 hours, 343 hours and 2,401 hours. The current radiation level is 250R/hr and climbing slowly. Everyone else has cleaned up and there's hot water, do you want to take a shower?"

"Well, I haven't done anything to get dirty but I suppose since we're all in this shelter it might be a good idea. I don't need my back washed today."

"Feel better?"

"No but I smell better. I grabbed some breakfast, have you eaten?"

"A couple of hours ago. Since you're the health care professional here, what do we need to be on the lookout for later in terms of disease?"

"Honey, there are water-borne diseases and water-based diseases that are a potential problem. Water-borne diseases include cholera, typhoid, shigella, polio, meningitis, and hepatitis A and E. Water-based diseases include guinea worm (dracunculiasis), paragonimiasis, clonorchiasis, and schistosomiasis (bilharzia). These diseases are caused by a variety of flukes, tapeworms, roundworms and tissue nematodes, often collectively referred to as helminths that infect humans. As long as we have clean water to drink and observe usual sanitation practices, we shouldn't have a problem with those."

"But other people might?"

"If they can't get decent water or are filthy people, yes."

"It isn't that far from Interstate 80. Once we're out of the shelter perhaps we'd better keep an eye on the highway."

"You can work that out with Daddy, your father, and Jeb. I won't be any help until I have the babies. I don't believe that Mandy will be much help at all; she made a couple of negative comments about firearms. Daddy told me that he acquired 4 M16A3s and supposed they might be hot. So I have a big rifle and a little rifle same as you."

"We have more weapons than we can shoot. I just hope that we don't need them. However, based on my experience in Iraq, I'd say that the country is going to go through a lot in the coming year or two. Much of that is going to depend on how well the government carries their share of the load during the recovery. If we get some people with big heads that think that the feds are our saviors and masters, we could have a lot of trouble, especially in a state like Nevada. You know the kind of people I mean; liberals who know what is right for everyone and think that the people are incapable of managing their own lives."

“Yeah I know, Californians... Harry Reid. On the disease thing, there are some other things that could be a problem, mosquito borne diseases and any type of flu virus. The best prevention for those types of diseases is staying in good health and avoiding situations where there might be stagnant water, etc.”

“I don’t think stagnant water will be a problem unless it gets a whole lot colder. However since China, Russia and the US are all in the northern hemisphere, I suppose we could have a couple of bad winter seasons. Are you set? I think I’ll go listen on the radio for a while.”

“I’m fine; I’ll come out for lunch.”

o

“I was talking to Becky about diseases and such that we might have to deal with after we come out of the shelter. Basically, we won’t have a problem as long as we limit our contact with other people. I think that we should maintain a watch on I-80 when we do come out. Meanwhile, I’m going to fire up that ham radio you bought and see if there is anything out there to hear.”

Jim scanned each of the bands, making sure to switch the antenna switches. After an hour of listening, he heard on a few faint signals that were too far away to make out clearly. So he switched to the CB radio and turned to channel 9. That was the complete opposite; all kinds of people were on channel 9 stepping all over each other. He listened but didn’t talk. The conversations ranged from pure panic to the ridiculous, like the guy who was going to Area 51 and steal the flying saucer. Jim figured that the minute the guy got close to Area 51 the guards would shoot to kill. His radio only had a range of 5 to 10 miles depending on a dozen different factors, but it seemed likely that it wasn’t more like 4 miles on this particular day.

Jim remember a piece of paper that his boss had told him to just put in his wallet and only dig out if TSHTF. This qualified so he dug out the paper and read it.

Jim,

I don’t know the state of your preparations but if you have a 20-meter radio, you can reach me on 14.285mhz AM. The channel is clear most of the time and no further than we are from each other, communications shouldn’t be a problem.

Gene

Why the hell not try?

“Gene this is Jim calling you on 14.285mhz, over. Gene this is Jim calling you on 14.285mhz, over.”

“Jim, this is Gene. So you did have a ham radio. What is your call sign?”

“I don’t have a call sign, Gene and I am not a ham.”

“Roger. Neither am I. You can be unit 2 and I’ll be unit 1. Are you and your family safe?”

“Yes, we are in the shelter we didn’t build. Becky is getting bed rest and is fine so far. My sister had a baby boy.”

“It’s going to be a while before I’m able to reopen the business, Jim. Will you be ok until that happens?”

“Thank you, yes. We’re good for a very long while. It appears that the radiation is leveling out now at about 500R/hr. Do you have any radiation detection equipment?”

“Roger, got it from Gonzales, Texas. Do you have extra Potassium Iodide or Iodate?”

“10 bottles to divide among 8 adults and 3 children.”

“You should be good there. How long are you planning on staying sheltered?”

“Becky, Mandy and little David for 100 days. Jeb and I will limit our exposure to half the maximum daily allowance. The older adults will probably move topside soon, but hopefully not until we’re sure that radiation level is safe.”

“Roger. Have you been following the news?”

“Yes, about 42 million casualties. Say, what are your long-term prospects at your location?”

“Not good. We’re not that far from the city, why, any ideas?”

“Possibly but I’ll have to discuss it with my family. What is your security situation?”

“This is Nevada, and I know a lot of people, Jim. It might be far better than you imagine.”

“OK. When do you want to talk again?”

“Why not an update conversation every 24-hours?”

“Ok, I’ll call back then. You’re all ok, right?”

“Us and 2 of your fellow employees who didn’t have anywhere to go with their families. We have 14 souls.”

“Copy 14 people. Talk to you tomorrow. Unit 2 clear.”

“Learn anything?”

“My boss is in a shelter with his family and the families of two other employees. They’re ok for now, but once they come out may have a problem.”

“What’s his situation?”

“Probably has a lot of food and a fairly good sized shelter, since he made room for two additional families. He probably also is well equipped with weapons. At least that’s what I assume he meant. We’ll be checking in with each other every 24 hours.”

“You seem to have something on your mind. What?”

“Depending on their situation and so forth, we might have better safety with more people. I have plenty of time to get the particulars.”

“If he is that well prepared, he may well have things we don’t. Check it all out; there is ample room on the ranch. We might have to bring in 3 homes if we accept 3 families, but we’re not short of room.”

“It smells like lunch is about ready, I’m going to go get Becky and come back for lunch.”

“Hmm, that smells good.”

“Chicken fried steak, smashed spuds, gravy and corn. We used the last of the milk, but I made a quart of instant.”

“Smells great, what are you preparing for supper?”

“Chili over rice and homemade bread.”

“David won’t eat, I don’t seem to have much milk.”

“There are several cases of infant formula, Similac. Will that do?”

“Bottles?”

“Playtex and plenty of liners. There is also a large supply of cloth diapers available. We only have those compact washers and dryers, but it should handle the diapers. I bought 2 large boxes of Dreft soap to wash the baby clothes in.”

“From Costco?”

“Yes, why?”

“You must be planning on raising a basketball team.”

“I bought it before I knew that Becky was having problems. I don’t know that I want to risk Becky and a baby again.”

“Live life a day at a time, Jim.”

“Hey the reading on this gadget went down a little,” Jeb said.

“When?”

“I checked it 30 minutes ago and it was level. I checked it just now and it was down a 5 whatever.”

“I’m going to start the countdown spreadsheet. Jeb please keep an eye on it. It should drop 90 percent in 7 hours. We can use the radiation level then to confirm the radiation level now and can figure out how long we’re going to need to stay sheltered.”

7 hours later...

“It says 55.”

“Our next check will be in 42 hours. By then it should say 5.5. It’s higher than I expected, nearly double.”

“The announcer on CNN said their weapons were in the range of 3mT.”

“Maybe that explains it. Why isn’t the news on?”

Jim and Becky – Chapter 3 – During Part 2

“They cut their schedule. Said that they’d only be on for 30 minutes at 6-hour intervals due to technical difficulties. I checked the radio and all of the local stations are off the air, at least for the time being.”

“I’ve got to get on the radio and call Gene.”

“Unit 1, this is unit 2, do you copy?”

“Roger, you’re late. Problem?”

“Negative, got busy and forgot, sorry.”

“The radiation level is falling.”

“10-4. Based on the 7-hour reading it looks like we got 550R/hr. We’re going to have to do the 2,401-hour routine. I talked to the others and after you and the others are out of the shelter, we’d like you to consider moving out here.”

“Roger. Do you have enough housing?”

“Negative. We’ll have to bring manufactured housing.”

“Do you have livestock?”

“Negative, but Becky’s dad has cattle, hogs and poultry.”

“Roger. How’s your fuel supply?”

“We have some diesel, very little gas and no propane. We heated our home with wood.”

“10-4. We’ll have to locate propane to heat the mobile homes. We’ll discuss your offer. 24-hours?”

“I’ll be on time from now on.”

“Unit 1 clear.”

“Clear.”

◦

“What did he say?”

“He said that they’d discuss it. He also pointed out that we’d need propane or LP to heat the mobile homes.”

“It won’t be a problem; I can get us a tank from Truckee. There’s a few people who owe me favors,” Ted grinned.

“This shelter could get old quickly.”

“Get used to it Jeb, I’m thinking 100 days and this is only Day 1.”

“Why so long?”

“Adjusting what I said earlier, If 0hr=550R/hr, then, 7hr=55R/hr, 49hr=5.5R/hr, 343hr=550mR/hr and 2,401hr=55mR/hr. The maximum allowable radiation dosage is 300R in 120 days or 104mR per hour if you’re exposed 24-hours per day. At 55mR/hr, our exposure would be about 1.3R per day or 158R in 120 days. I told you earlier that I didn’t know the long-term effects of that level of radiation. We might be able to get out briefly, but we can’t stay out and feel good about it for 100 days. And I’m talking Rads, not REMs. They changed all of terms but I do know that for a full body equivalent dose, 1 Sv causes slight blood changes, 2-5 Sv causes nausea, hair loss, hemorrhage and will cause death in many cases. More than 6 Sv will lead to death in less than two months in more than 80% of cases, and much over 4 is more likely than not to cause death. 1 Sv \approx 107R”

“You’re an expert on radiation?”

“Hell no, but the Army teaches you enough to avoid getting killed. As much as I disliked the MOPP suits, I wouldn’t mind having 8 of them right about now and some M40 gas masks.”

“What’s the greatest danger from the radiation?”

“Reproductive organs. That’s why I’m not interested in leaving the shelter any sooner than we have to. Or, did Mandy and you only plan on having one child?”

“We didn’t plan on any set number, bro. But I always figured on more than one.”

“If that’s the case, I recommend that you learn to like playing Solitaire.”

◦

Much of the Emergency Alert System is inoperative due to the attacks and many media operations like CNN are on the air only briefly. Therefore we were unable to broadcast the President’s earlier message. Standby for a taped presentation of that broadcast.

My fellow Americans,

As you have no doubt heard, Chinese nuclear missiles hit 11 cities and 4 military installations. My advisors tell me that the prevailing winds will carry the radiation to the east at an average rate of 15 miles per hour. It will be a minimum of 2 weeks before we can allow rescue personnel to aid the injured. Laura and I pray that you are all safe; however we have an estimated casualty toll of 43 million. A casualty is not the same as a fatality; it refers to both the dead and injured.

Satellite images of China reveal that that country will no longer threaten the world. However, it seems evident that an armed conflict has broken out in Europe. This country will not, I repeat, will not supply armed forces to that conflict. I have directed that the naval units that were directed to Australia return to this country and arrive in 14 days. The Australian government has provided humanitarian supplies and the Navy will transport them back here.

Effective immediately the United States is under martial law. This will be enforced to the extent that the military is able leave their posts. However, as that is not the case in every locale, some military presence may be absent. Nevertheless, a dusk to dawn curfew is now in effect. For those who would take advantage of the misfortune of others, let tell you plainly, you will be asked to surrender to proper authority and should you refuse, you will be shot.

We have considered and will continue to consider which of the various existing Executive Orders to enforce. As we have more information and decisions are made, this office will make the appropriate announcements. FEMA will be in overall charge of the rescue and cleanup, assisted by the US military. Voluntary relocation centers will be available for those that need them, but anyone who has the means to remain in place is advised to do so.

There will be some shortages in the coming days. Some will be severe and others more of an inconvenience. Much of this country's infrastructure remains intact and services will be restored as rapidly as possible. Please have reasonable expectations, it is going to take some time. I will report to the American people again when more information is available.

God Bless America.

"I think a lot of those casualties will probably become fatalities. Our training indicated that most people in the areas where a nuclear weapon was used would receive a fatal dose of radiation. People who are downwind of the fallout must take shelter, as we have, or likewise receive an excessive dose of radiation. The water supplies and sanitation will also be disrupted for some time, leading to the diseases that I asked Becky about."

"Will we get radiation in this shelter?" Sally asked.

“Every 16” of earth gives us a protection factor of 10. We have 12’ of cover or 144”. Our protection factor is over 1 trillion. We shouldn’t get any radiation in the shelter at all as long as we keep it closed. Our greatest risk would be from the tunnel to the basement, but I checked that and the radiation is negligible.”

“Then what now?”

“We wait. There is nothing else we can do. We need to conserve electricity to spare our diesel fuel. When the radiation is low enough, we can reinstall the alternators and use the wind to recharge the batteries. Ted you said you could get a propane tank, how large? And, can you get it filled?”

“I can get a 3,000-gallon propane tank and 2,700-gallons of propane. I’m not sure about refills. That would give each of 3 trailers 900-gallons for cooking and heat. It should be enough for a year. As far as the trailers go, there were several new ones on a lot in Reno and a couple in Truckee. It will just be a matter of moving and leveling them. Do we have the materials to hook up water, sewer and gas to the trailers?”

“I have both black pipe and galvanized in the barn, Ted. There should be enough 3” PVC to put in sewer. The thing that bothers me is fuel for that generator and gas for the vehicles. My farm tank only holds 300 gallons of gas.”

“If we can find a way to move my tractor fuel, we’ll have almost 1,000-gallons of diesel. My gas farm tank was only about ½ full, assuming someone didn’t get to it and help themselves.”

“There is no point worrying about that for now. I suppose we could risk brief outings when the radiation level falls to under 500mR, but it would be for a maximum of 4-5 hours. That won’t be for at least 2 weeks, if then. The absolute maximum is 2.5R in 24 hours.”

o

At 49 hours...

“We’re right on track, 5.5R. In 12 days we’ll be at 550mR.”

“How long to install the alternators?”

“About 30 minutes. I checked the fuel and we don’t have a problem so I’m going to wait until the 2 weeks are up. Since I’ve put them in and taken them out, I can do it faster than anyone else. I’d only get about 225mR in the time it would take to install the alternators. If we continued to conserve, I think we could get by with that amount of electricity. That brings up another point. It won’t be enough for 3 trailers and us. I bought 4 alternators presuming that the windmills would drive them. That didn’t work out so I have

2 spare alternators. If we could get a second windmill, we could generate 360 amps of 12-volt electricity, 2,880 watts.”

“Did you get voltage regulators too?”

“Yep, and spares. Why?”

“We could dismantle my windmill and erect it here. You know the one; it’s on the back 40 in California.”

“Could we move it intact?”

“It’s possible, but it would be darn heavy. And I’m not so sure that that angle iron is strong enough. If we took it apart in sections, that might work. We’d have to cut cross-country because of the overpasses on I-80.”

“How many sections?”

“I’m not sure, 3 or 4. We couldn’t do it before your boss and those other people are here, it would be too much for 4 men to do.”

“It is probably rusted, how would we get the nuts off the bolts?”

“Cutting torch. Like they do in muffler shops. Then we could either use new bolts and nuts or weld it together. I’m betting it would take about 3 days to disassemble and transport and 2 days to reassemble it. How long to fabricate the stuff to drive the two alternators?”

“Like I told you, I tried 4 already, so I already have them built. Maybe 2 hours to mount the stuff. Gene asked me about livestock. What the situation with yours?”

“In the barn with automatic feeders and waterers. The well pump is powered by solar panels so they should have water. Hey wait, we could move the solar panels and add another 1,750 watts of power, during the day at least. And, I have 12 batteries that we could add to what you have.”

“48 batteries at 300 amps would power both of my inverters. They’re only 5kw each, but can surge to 10kw. If we could find a third, we could equal the capacity of the generator, 15kw.”

o

“The reading is 2R/hr. I’m going to chance installing the alternators. It will only take 30 minutes so I shouldn’t get much more than 1R. Someone time it and we’ll figure it out later.”

“I’ll help, maybe we can cut the time in half.”

“Are you sure Jeb?”

“Who is the big brother here? If you’re going, I’m going. Dad you run the stopwatch.”

“How long?”

“21 minutes. It’s probably a good thing Jeb helped. What does it look like out there?”

“Believe it or not, peaceful. There weren’t any cars on I-80. We need to get a shower and wash out anything we might have gotten on us. We left our clothes at the bottom of the tunnel.”

“I’ll check them with the radiation meter.”

“Hot?”

“Just your shoes. You should probably wash them off in the shower too.”

“Are the alternators putting out power?”

“They seem to be. I shut down the generator and we’ll service it once it cools off.”

“Four freezers and 2 refrigerators plus the lights. That’s about 5.6kw. We probably should unplug 3 of the freezers and only have one plugged in at a time. If we can get by on the power in the batteries and the alternators, we’ll only have to run the generator a couple of hours a day. You said your solar panels were 1,750 watts? Four alternators will generate 2,880 watts so we’ll have a total of 4,630. We’re still going to be short on energy once we have 3 trailers.”

“Did you try running 3 alternators instead of 4?”

“No, Ted, I didn’t. I ran out of time and knew that 4 wouldn’t work and 2 worked just fine. If 3 would work and we had both windmills, we’d have a total of 6kw. As long as we ran the freezers in shifts, we could just about get enough energy from the windmills and your solar panels without using the generator.”

“But you said you have 10kw inverter power with a 20kw surge.”

“I do, but they would drain the batteries faster than we’re charging them.”

“So how many more solar panels would you need? They are 125 watt, 12-volt panels, right?”

“Four kw. I guess that’s what, 32 panels?”

“Yeah, right. We’ll I guess that I’ll have to pick up the others, then.”

“What others?”

“I had 36 panels on order. I wanted to power the barn and the lights in my outbuildings. They called and said that they were in, but what with all that happened, it slipped my mind. They’re paid for; I had to prepay the order. It would be just a matter of picking them and the inverters up.”

o

“What are you calculating Jim?”

“Becky, your dad had 36 solar panels in Truckee and 14 at his farm. That would give us 6.25kw of energy. If we can run 6 alternators at 720 watts each, we’d have another 4.32kw of power or a total of 10.57kw. That would be more than enough to power the house and 3 mobile homes and we could avoid running the generator completely. Each family would have enough power for a refrigerator, freezer and fan motor. I didn’t think that we could do it, but if we can get 2 more alternators, those solar panels and one more 5kw inverter, we can get by.”

“How long were Jeb and you outside today?”

“21 minutes, dad timed us with a stopwatch.”

“Unless you’re planning on becoming a papa early, you’d better cut off the outside trips. I was positively terrified.”

“Let’s have lunch and catch the news from CNN.”

“Don’t change the subject.”

“I’m not. I probably won’t have to go outside any more until the 100 days are up. But I had to supplement the generator. We only had enough fuel for 78 days at 50% power. As it is, we may still run out of fuel before the 100 days are up. We’re only going to run the generator enough from now on to recharge the batteries.”

“This sitting in a hole is the ground is getting very frustrating.”

“We can go for a walk. It is approximately 240’ to make one lap around the shelter. A little exercise might relieve your pent up energy.”

“I feel like a whale. I probably look like a fright, too.”

“You look just fine, honey. Mandy hasn’t really been taking care of herself and David the way she should. Maybe you should talk to her and see if you can cheer her up.”

“I’ll do her hair or something, it might cheer her up.”

◦

“You go get a shower and I’ll do your hair.”

“Are you trying to cheer me up too, Becky?”

“I suppose. It has to be tough having a brand new baby and having a nuclear war.”

“I just feel lost.”

“So do I and I didn’t just have a baby. It could be the war and maybe a little post-partum blues. Whatever it is, you have to get a grip and take care of your little boy. Where are you from?”

“Elkhart, Kansas, ever heard of it?”

“Heard of it yes, but I don’t know where it is.”

“Southwest Kansas on the Oklahoma state line. Kansas 27 and US 56 go through there. I’m pretty sure my family is ok they had a tornado shelter. It’s going to be a long time before I can see them again, isn’t it?”

“Maybe. Who knows? I’ll see if Jim can get in touch with a ham operator in that area and try and pass a message to your mom and dad that you had a baby boy.”

“Thank you. They shouldn’t get any fallout. They’re too far south to get Denver fallout and I don’t think I heard the name of any cities immediately to the west.”

“You see, they’re probably ok and worried about you. Get your shower and I get Jim on the radio.”

“K.”

“Jim, Mandy’s people are in Elkhart, Kansas. Do you want to see if you can raise anyone in that area on the radio? I’m sure she’d feel much better if she knew that her family was ok and that she had David.”

“No promises, but I can try. I think a lot of the hams’ talk on 75 meters so I’ll give that a try. What was her maiden name?”

“Robins. You’ll have to ask Jeb what her father’s name is.”

“Jeb, I’m going to try and reach someone in Elkhart, Kansas. Can you tell me what Mandy’s father’s name is?”

“Same as yours. Jim. Jim and Hazel Robins.”

◦

“Any luck?”

“I reached a ham in Liberal, Kansas. He said that they weren’t that far from Elkhart and he’d try and pass a message along. He also said that everyone in the area was fine.”

“I’ll tell her. How far is it from Elkhart?”

“He said a little over 50 miles.”

“That’s a long ways.”

“Not so far when you consider that it’s farming country and there probably aren’t that many people in the area anyway.”

“Ok, I’ll pass it along. Did you write down the frequency that you reached that guy on?”

“Yes, 3.795mhz on the 80-meter band and I’ll follow up in a day or two and see if he was able to pass the message along.”

◦

“Jim reached a ham in Liberal. He told Jim that he’d try and pass a message along. He also said that everyone in the area was fine. Jim said he’d call him back in a couple of days and see if he was able to pass the message. Sorry, that was the best that we could do, Mandy.”

“Our farm was east of Elkhart so we were almost exactly 50 miles from Liberal. It’s 2 counties over. Elkhart is in Morton County and Liberal is in Seward County. Both towns are County Seats. He should be able to pass a message. Morton County is small, less than 4,000 people.”

“Right, but no promises, ok?”

“Ok.”

“Your hair came out nice.”

“Thanks, I brushed it.”

“Feeling better?”

“A little, but not all that much. I’m mostly out of my funk, but maybe I do have a little post-partum blues.”

“The best thing for that is to keep busy. Since you’re not nursing, I have something you might take, but it will take about 3 weeks to kick in. At the moment, it’s too early to consider it. Let me explain something:

“Postpartum blues – Better known as the ‘baby blues,’ affects between 50%-75% of women after delivery. If you are experiencing the baby blues, you will have frequent, prolonged bouts of crying for no apparent reason, sadness and anxiety. The condition usually begins in the first week (one to four days) after delivery. Although the experience is unpleasant, the condition usually subsides within two weeks without treatment. All you’ll need is reassurance and help with the baby and household chores.

“Postpartum depression – This is a far more serious condition than postpartum blues, affecting about one in 10 new mothers. People, who have had postpartum depression before, have an increased risk of 50 to 80%. Symptoms include: may experience alternating ‘highs’ and ‘lows,’ frequent crying, irritability and fatigue, as well as feelings of guilt, anxiety and inability to care for your baby or yourself. Symptoms range from mild to severe and may appear within days of the delivery or gradually, even up to a year later. Although symptoms can last from several weeks up to a year, treatment with psychotherapy or antidepressants is very effective.”

“If you have postpartum depression, I can give you medication.”

“What is it?”

“An antidepressant. I have limited quantities of Prozac (fluoxetine), Celexa (citalopram), Luvox (fluvoxamine), Zoloft (sertraline), or Paxil (paroxetine).”

“Let’s wait.”

“We really have to anyway, Mandy, it could just be postpartum blues and you wouldn’t need an antidepressant for that. Besides, having a baby and having the world as we know it end in a period of just a few days would depress any woman.”

o

“Well, does she feel better?”

“A little perhaps. It’s really too early to tell if she’s upset by having a baby or the end of the world. Give it a couple of weeks and we’ll see. I know that if you can reach her fami-

ly and she doesn't snap out of it, we have a potential problem. If it's the baby blues, she'll be fine in a couple of weeks."

"How do you feel? Depressed too?"

"Not really depressed, angrier than anything."

"That's good."

"Why is that good?"

"Define depression in layman's terms."

"Depression is anger turned inward. Oh, if I'm angry, I'm not depressed, right?"

"As long as you stay angry, you're fine. Let me know if you get depressed and I'll dig out the Thorazine."

"You try that and you'll be singing soprano."

"I was joking."

"I'm not."

o

At 343 hours...

"Roger unit 2. Our situation hasn't changed."

"We have the means to supply adequate power and fuel for our immediate needs after you arrive. We will have 50 125-watt solar panels and possibly up to 4,320 watts from wind driven alternators. There are some fuel reserves on Becky's dad's farm and he says he can get 2,700-gallons of propane. If you can access more solar panels, it would really help. Ted said there were 2 singlewides in California but you might have to find some there, Copy?"

"Understood. We'll look for panels, inverters, and homes. Our radiation level is down to 550mR, are you the same?"

"Affirmative. However, that limits us to about 4 hours outside and we aren't prepared to risk it at this time."

"How is Becky?"

"Good, no more symptoms. Do you have the means to tow 3 homes?"

“Our deliver trucks had the appropriate hitches. We’ll use the three of them to pull the homes. We were out briefly and a lot of people have abandoned the city. We may go out and look for some things now. When we have everything lined up, we’ll blow this dump and head your way. You can figure on that happening when the radiation level is 100mR/hr.”

“10-4. I’m sure that Dad and Ted will be topside by then. Jeb, Mandy, David, Becky and I won’t.”

“Copy. You are going the full 100 days. However, if we wait that long, salvaging might be dicey. Do you have space for 14 more people at night?”

“Affirmative, we’ll manage. I’ll tell Ted we may need the propane sooner.”

◦

“What about my bed? I told you I’d stay the 100 days but that you had to get my bed for me.”

“That’s right, I told you that didn’t I? Was Mandy pleased with the news from that ham operator?”

“It made her day. I don’t believe she had postpartum depression so I’m not going to give her an antidepressant. She’s coping as well as the rest of us now. How long will it be before the others show up?”

“I’m not really sure, Becky. Gene said 100mR/hr and that could be 5 weeks, maybe more, maybe less. If you need a specific answer, I’m afraid you’re out of luck. I heard your dad and mine talking about going to Truckee soon. They want to get those solar panels before some scavenger finds them and takes them. There is also the matter of the propane. It would be good if we had everything ready to go when Gene and the others showed up.”

“They’re not going to get sick are they, going out early like this?”

“No. They’ll have to be certain that they don’t run into any hot spots, but 2R in one day won’t make you sick unless you do it repeatedly and get an accumulated dose of 300R.”

◦

“We will be gone 4 hours, boys. We will be out of radio contact, but our plan is to pick up the solar panels, alternators and arrange for the propane. I’m going to take a few of those gold pieces and see if the shine can induced Ted’s friend to cough up more propane. It’s probably better he sell it to us than have to defend it from people who aren’t willing to pay. Assuming everything goes as planned, we’ll wait a week to install the al-

ternators and solar panels. Then, depending on the radiation level, we'll start putting in the plumbing and electrical lines for the trailers. We should have bought one mobile ham radio so we could keep in touch, but Mrs. Collins didn't have one."

"Listen you two, your limit is 4 hours and in an emergency, 4½ hours. If you can't be back here by then, go to ground somewhere safe. I can see that we're going to need to do something about longer-range communications but at the moment I don't know what. If you're not back in 24 hours, Jeb and I are coming looking. You both took the Potassium Iodide and have your dosimeters, right?"

"Jim, Charlie didn't get me and I don't think any MZB's will either. We'll be careful and you can count on that. If we get hurt Sally and Glenda will kill us."

"Not if I get to you first."

o

"Unit 1, this is unit 2."

"Unit 1, go ahead 2."

"What do you have for mobile ham radios?"

"I have an extra 2-meter rig and a HF rig."

"I could really use the HF rig and an antenna. Dad and Ted went after the panels and gas. That leaves us out of touch. Could I come get the HF rig?"

"Negative, I'll deliver it. We found some things you can use. Give me an hour."

"Roger, out."

o

"There you go, Jim. The antenna is in that box; you'll have to assemble it. We found 75 125-watt solar panels and 3 5kw inverters. That should power the mobile homes during the daylight. We'll look for more in one other store. We'll need 40 apiece to generate 5kw per trailer. We're still looking for batteries and may end up at one of the Country Clubs stripping golf carts. Show me around, this is a nice shelter you didn't build."

"So how does ours compare to yours?"

"Yours is bigger. I converted 2 40' containers by heavily reinforcing them and burying them. Each of your 4 wings is bigger than one of my containers. The extra supplies were stored in a 3rd container that I didn't have time to convert and bury. All I have to do to move half of our supplies here is to hook onto it with a tractor and pull it here. We

can empty my basement into the 3 delivery trucks and move those things when we bring the trailers. We have those spotted and as soon as the radiation level is 100mR/hr, we'll load the trucks and start hauling."

"Then you have the equivalent of 2 semi-trailers of food supplies?"

"That's about right. Now you see why I didn't get too upset when you got the flu."

"What about other things?"

"Weapons and ammo?"

"Well... Are you familiar with the STG58A Austrian FAL Rifle?"

"Becky has one."

"Select fire?"

"Hers is, yes."

"So are mine, all 12 of them. I don't like the M16 and I could get the STG58A for about the same money, less than a Colt HBAR. Plus, the magazines were only \$5 each. I have a fair amount of 7.62x51mm ammo too."

"My 7.62x51mm is a reworked M1A. Replaced the springs and the op rod and it works fine. You didn't buy those FALs with select fire did you?"

"They had the sears swapped out, but I told you I had some friends. That shed up top there is big enough to store my ammo, is it empty?"

"You can't have that much ammo."

"Two full pallet loads full of the Aussie surplus. 64 cases per pallet, 800 rounds per case."

"Sheesh, and I thought I had a lot of ammo."

"I had a truck making a pickup in New Jersey. Remember when the Ammoman had an out the door price that was really cheap?"

"Vaguely."

"He threw in the pallets. The ammo is in the container. We really should get a tractor and tow it out here, ASAP."

"Bring it tomorrow if you want."

"I might just do that."

o

"Who was that?"

"Gene."

"What did he want?"

"He brought me a HF mobile radio and antenna to mount in one of our father's pickups. I was going to bring him in so you could visit but we were discussing guns and then ammo. You won't believe what he has: 12 select fire STG58A Austrian FAL Rifles and over 100,000 rounds of Aussie surplus. I gave him a tour, where were you?"

"Ladies room."

"You ok?"

"As far as I know, yes. No more symptoms of the earlier problem. We have 10,000 rounds of both 5.56x45mm and 7.62x51mm don't we?"

"Yes. That's right."

"And daddy has 20,000 rounds each of 7.62x51mm and 5.56x45mm. What does your dad have?"

"5.56x45mm, 12-gauge and .22LR."

"What was Gene thinking? Did he think that Russia was going to invade?"

"He reminded me of when Eric the Ammoman had the Aussie surplus really cheap out the door. He said he had a truck in New Jersey making a pickup and he bought 2 full pallets, 128 800-round cases."

"I guess we won't have to worry about running out of ammo."

"Probably not. Anyway he has a 40' container of supplies and enough more to fill his 3 delivery trucks. I can only imagine that he has the equivalent of 2 semi-trailers of food and or supplies and he concurred. His shelters are 2 converted 40' containers. We have more than twice as much space here as he has there. Gene didn't say, but I have the impression that they may come here sooner than they planned."

"We have 9 and they have 14? 23 people wouldn't begin to fill this place up. Why don't you call him on the radio and suggest just that? They might get a little extra radiation but

if they could move everything in a single day, they could stay sheltered for a few days and even it out, right?”

“Right. It’s been almost 4 hours, I wonder where our fathers are?”

“Try the CB. If they’re within 5 miles they should reply.”

“Good idea.”

“Dad, this is Jim, do you and Ted have your ears on?”

“We’re just leaving Ted and Sally’s place. We should be there in 10 minutes. Lots to tell you, see you soon. Clear.”

o

“You two pushed the limit, but you’re all smiles, what went down?”

“You had to see it to believe it Jim. The glitter of that gold almost melted Ted’s friend Mel. We have a 10,000-gallon tank and 9,000-gallons of propane coming our way. We found 5 of the GM alternators so you will have spares. We picked up the solar panels and stopped by Ted’s to pick up his ammo and check on the livestock.”

“I thought all of your ammo was here, Ted.”

“Not all of it, but most of it. I had some 12-gauge, .22LR and more of the 7.62x51mm.”

“I called Gene and he brought me a mobile HF radio and an antenna. Before you two make any more trips we’ll have to install it in one of your pickups. We aren’t going to be short of 7.62x51mm. Gene has 128 800-round cases of the Aussie surplus.”

“What does he have for rifles, M1As?”

“Twelve select fire STG58A Austrian FAL Rifles. I didn’t ask how many magazines but he said they only cost him \$5 each. Becky suggested that I ask them to move out here immediately. He has the equivalent of 2 40’ trailers of food and supplies, 75 of the 125-watt solar panels, 3 5kw inverters and is looking for more panels. He also said that they had 3 trailers spotted and could tow them with the delivery trucks.”

“Might be a good idea. Did he have any 12-volt batteries?”

“Looking. I’ll call him back and suggest that they move immediately.”

“Unit 1, this is unit 2.”

“I’m back, go ahead, unit 2.”

“They did very well on the gas, 3 times as much as we thought. Becky and everyone have suggested that you move immediately. I concur. Your opinion?”

“Can do, but we’ll have to stay sheltered until we even out the radiation exposure. We’ll need someone to drive one of the delivery trucks or the semi.”

“It had better be me. Jeb and I can be there tomorrow whenever you want us.”

“0900?”

“You’ve got it. Where?”

“Meet us at the office. It’s easier than putting my address on the air. The gas?”

“The tank and I’m not sure how many loads tomorrow, maybe all three.”

“They found the other solar panels so we aren’t missing anything.”

“0900 at the office see you tomorrow.”

o

“What did George Peppard say? Oh, yeah, I love it when a plan comes together. If they’re going to need to shelter to even out their radiation exposure, we’ll have time to get the plumbing in and set the trailers. And having them here is really going to enhance our security.”

“How long for the plumbing?”

“At 4 hours a day max, probably a couple of weeks. We’ll dig the trench, install everything, fill the trench and then move the trailers. It will take a couple of days on average to level each one. That’s just an estimate of course.”

“Time won’t be a problem, radiation exposure will. We’d better not rush anything. We will have to get your livestock moved and that windmill.”

“Becky, everything worked out well. Jeb and I will have to go to Reno tomorrow, but not for very long, 4 hours tops.”

“Then Daddy and John can take the day off and stay in the shelter.”

“Good idea.”

o

Right about then it started to get confusing. Jeb and Jim had dosed with KI because they weren't able to totally avoid going outside. The dosimeters proved to be a blessing; they could monitor their radiation exposure. Everyone had a CD V-742 dosimeter, which registered 200R. Gene's wife Marilyn was driving a delivery truck and Gene had the semi. Royce and Abel each were driving a delivery truck. It was as simple as pulling on to the mobile home dealer's lot, airing the trailer tires, hooking up to the trailers and pulling out. It took about 30 minutes a trailer. The trailers were demos and furnished. Gene had selected these 3 units because they were set up for propane.

The trailers were nice, propane stove, electric refrigerator, dishwasher, disposal, propane hot water heater and furnace. The furniture was new but junk. It would last until the radiation died down enough to allow them to recover theirs. Everything got parked and they entered the shelter. A quick discussion ensued and it was decided to wait 2 weeks before anyone left. The large propane tank was sitting in cradles when they returned and contained 3,000 gallons of propane. Ted told them that 2 more 3,000 gallon loads would be delivered the following day.

o

"Welcome to our humble abode. I'm Jim's wife Becky. The lady with the baby is Jeb's wife Mandy and the baby is David. This is my father, Ted, and mother, Sally. That gentleman is Jim's father, John, and the other lady is his mother, Glenda. You already have met Jim and Jeb. The menu for tonight is southern fried chicken. I suggest everyone tour the shelter and then we'll work out sleeping arrangements. Gene you can introduce everyone and please excuse me, nature calls, again."

"Royce Benson, his wife Susan and children Jack and Janice. Abel Cain, his wife Sarah and children Ramona, Sheila and Elizabeth. I'm Gene Knowles; this is my wife Marilyn and our children Jake, Bob and David. Jim, would you please show everyone around? John, Ted do you have a moment?"

"Sure."

"First of all thanks, Reno was become untenable. You fellows look like you might be the age to have served in Vietnam, right?"

"Same birthdays, drafted together, trained together and were in different squads of the same Platoon, '70-'71," Ted replied.

"Like I said, Reno is untenable, there isn't any food and all of the grocery stores and food warehouses have been looted. Anyway, when we get topside and start unloading, you'll probably run into some things that might surprise you that I didn't mention to Jim. I was in the Corps in the '80s. My brother went in a year after I did and stayed. He's a Gunnery Sergeant. He's worked in supply for a while and I managed to pick up some things from him that aren't legal for civilians to own. First off, I have an M60 and ammo for it. Next, you'll see several cases of 40mm grenades. They go with the 4 M-79s I

have. The Corps never throws anything away, and they tested the M-79 in Iraq as a possible answer to the IEDs. Whatever, I have 4 of those and grenades to go with them. I wish I had a .50 caliber machine gun but they're in short supply. I just didn't want anyone having a heart attack when they saw those grenades."

"I didn't think people would be out and around yet."

"Some people's hunger overcame their fear of radiation. There are a lot of Californians living in Vegas and Reno these days, those that stayed, anyway. Some people bolted, but it's hard to even guess how far they got. Bush said he'd send in the military but I haven't seen them yet."

"What about your warehouse, looted?"

"I didn't have much left so I didn't bother locking the doors. I just had the 3 delivery trucks and they're all here hooked to the trailers. Once we're able to stay aboveground, we'll see about getting our furniture from our homes. I have a standby generator that I didn't bring. It's a 45kw Onan propane generator. Jim said you got propane and I know where we might be able to get a refill. I only had a small propane tank, 1,000-gallons and it's empty I'm afraid. Maybe we should think about moving it when we move the generator."

"Whoa, slow down, Gene. We have nothing but time on our hands, you don't have to tell us everything just now," John chuckled.

"I guess maybe I'm excited about getting the hell out of Reno, sorry."

"Let's figure out how we're going to bunk everyone. We put in 16 bunks and brought down Becky's bed so that will take care of 18. We could get 2 full sized beds out of the house, there's lots of floor space. We can bring them through the basement tunnel and avoid going outside. David has his crib, so that gives everyone a place to sleep. Before I forget it, thanks for the loan of the mobile radio."

"Keep it, John. All of the delivery trucks have business radios and I brought the transceiver from the shop. We'll have to get the antenna, but that won't be too much trouble."

"That's a tower isn't it?"

"Right, an 85' collapsing, tip-up tower. It's not that difficult to raise and lower, one of those six men and a boy sort of deals. There's a reel of RG-213U coax, too. We replaced the radios in the trucks 2 years back. I have the old ones, thought I might need them. Looks like I was right."

"Dinner is ready," Glenda announced.

"Let's eat and then get the beds."

o

“Fine meal, thank you ladies,” Royce said. “Gene, I do believe that Jim has one up on you when it comes to a shelter.”

“More than one, he has the most important thing, location. My compliments to the chefs. You fellas ready to go after those beds?”

“This tunnel was a last minute addition, Gene. What with Becky’s condition, she either had to stay in the shelter or we had to find a better way to get in and out of the shelter.”

“Handy, though. Used culvert?”

“Everything is used. We painted the shelter but didn’t have a chance to paint this tunnel. We didn’t tar the outside either so I suppose we could get water if it rained.”

“If it rains much, it would be a miracle. Those gaskets should hold unless we get a flood.”

“That’s what we thought. Besides, we had to do this in one day; we couldn’t leave the entrance to the shelter exposed.”

o

Two weeks later...

Ding, ding, ding, ding...

“What the hell?”

“Breakfast is ready. Get in line for one of the two johns and come eat. I think they made pancakes this morning.”

“So, what’s the radiation level?”

“150mR/hr. I think we can risk 8 hours topside and get that plumbing and electricity in.”

“If it’s all the same to you fellas, I rather make a trip to Reno and get the tank, generator and antenna tower.”

“We can do that this morning and Jeb can stay behind and start the trenches.”

“We’ll need to unload 2 of the delivery trucks into the shed. You said it was empty, didn’t you Jim?”

Jim and Becky – Chapter 4 – Early After

President Bush announced today that all military forces are now out helping the populous. However given the size of our military, significant help will be some time in coming to many areas. He indicated that the most immediate effort would be to transport food to communities in need. Most of the areas stuck by the Chinese have radiation levels that prohibit much assistance. Refugee centers have been established for the residents of the 11 metropolitan areas hit in the attack. However, the President again urged that only people without the means to provide for themselves utilize the centers.

Naval vessels that arrived from Australia ported in the Santa Barbara area. The ports of San Diego, Los Angeles/Long Beach, San Francisco and Seattle were destroyed or heavily damaged in the attack. The ships carried several hundred tons of relief supplies supplied by the Australian government.

In Europe, Germany has completed seizing France. Unlike the occupation of WW II, the Germans have installed a moderate government in France and have only left a small peacekeeping force. In Germany, the elections were held and the Chancellor remains in office. Her office will be issuing a statement in the coming days.

As we reported earlier, the Chinese employed 3mT nuclear weapons on their missiles. As a result, the blast damage and resulting radioactive fallout was much worse than imagined. Although the weapons were airburst to maximize their damage, they were close enough to the ground to create small craters, approximately the size, according to authorities, that one might expect from a 1mT device detonated at 500’.

CNN will now resume a 24-hour broadcasting schedule. None of the other networks have been able to restore service and in an effort to avoid duplication, surviving employees of other networks have joined us in Atlanta. CNN welcomes Britt Hume and Bill O’Reilly from FOX, Bob Schieffer from CBS, Charlie Gibson from ABC and Brian Williams from NBC. It would seem that many anchors avoided the attacks altogether.

“Hell, they probably commandeered news helicopters and left the minute they heard,” John chuckled. “Jeb, will we be able to start laying pipes and electrical conduit tomorrow?”

“You can begin, but I won’t have access to the well until tomorrow afternoon and the septic system the day after. Dad, were there still two mobile homes in Truckee?”

“Yes, why?”

“I think we should get them. We can’t have 4 families living in the house. You and mom can live there with Jim and Becky and Ted and Sally and Mandy and I should have separate homes. That will leave us short on solar panels, but with the number of golf cart batteries Gene, Royce and Abel found in Reno, we can probably get by. We should look

for 80 more 125-watt panels and two more 5kw inverters. Since we're so short on diesel, I believe that we're going to need to use Gene's propane generator."

"Take the 2 empty delivery trucks, John, and maybe you can find some things in Truckee while you're there," Gene suggested.

"I hate to break this discussion up, but Becky is in labor. I think we're going to have a couple of premature babies on our hands. She said that the babies should be ok, but probably will be very small, under 5 pounds. She's just at the end of her 8th month."

"How are you doing, honey?"

"I'm fineeeeeeeeeeeee. Oh, that was a good one. Get out of here and give the ladies room to work. I'm far enough along that there's very little risk, Jim. Go boil some water or something."

At 8 months term, most babies are fully developed. Difficulties, if any, often relate to lung development. Given the earlier circumstances with the placental abruption, she had been fortunate to get this far with her pregnancy. Mandy and David were still living in the shelter along with Becky. They would be allowed to leave once 100 days had elapsed, but that was still a few weeks off. As it was, the radiation level was now under 100mR/hr and the older adults were living above ground full time and the younger adults and children were staying in the shelter at nights, effectively reducing their radiation exposure to a level of 50mR per hour.

"We have to get the livestock moved, soon. For no more chickens than I have, I think we could convert your shed to a henhouse, John. At least not being able to gather the eggs had its good side, we have a lot of pullets."

"We'll have to put up a fence and clip their wings."

"I have a roll of wire in my machine shed, but may be short on posts."

"I have a dozen or so in my barn."

"That should be enough. Let's pull these two homes back to your farm and we'll run back to my place and get the wire and posts."

"Lead the way."

o

"Four pounds fourteen ounces and five pounds zero ounces, he's bigger than she is. Congratulations papa."

"Any problems? Is Becky ok?"

“Ask her yourself, she’s awake.”

“Hi, you. We did well, they’re gorgeous. Did everything go ok?”

“Much quicker delivery than I thought, especially for first babies. Next time, one will be enough.”

“It’s going to be easy to remember their birthdays, it’s Valentine’s Day.”

“How are things going?”

“Outside? Our fathers went to Truckee and got 2 trailers so Jeb and your folks each have a home. They went back to your dad’s farm and got posts and wire and are converting the storage shed to a hen house and fencing in a place for the chickens. As soon as we get the mobile homes set in place and the solar panels installed, the 3 homes from Reno should be electrically independent. We’ll need 80 more panels for the other two homes. The 50 panels your Dad had are on the roof of the house. Another week or 10 days should see everything done. And, in about 20 days, you will be able to move back to the house.”

“What’s the weather like?”

“Cold bordering on ice cold. There is a fair amount of dust in the air judging from the sunsets.”

“This is one hell of a world we brought our children into.”

“It wasn’t our doing and you know it. We’re going to be ok; we have power, propane, good clean water and adequate sanitation. There have been very few vehicles on I-80, but we’re keeping a watch.”

“I’m going to get some sleep and then feed our babies. Are you dead set on James and Rebecca?”

“There’s nothing wrong with our names. Would you rather we name them Jenna and what’s his name?”

“It was Joe and no, James and Rebecca are fine.”

“I wonder what ever became of Joe and Jenna?”

“Pray that we don’t find out. They deserve each other, but that probably didn’t happen.”

“Oh I don’t know, Gene said that God has a sense of humor.”

o

“Were there any more solar panels in Reno, Gene?”

“We cleaned out 2 places but there could be more. We would just need to make a trip back up there and look around. If you have a Reno Yellow Pages, I can look for some likely places.”

“We’ll have water tomorrow and septic the day after. We’re mostly just waiting on Jeb to finish up.”

“Do you want to try and move your livestock tomorrow?”

“I don’t believe we’ll move anything except the chickens for now. Let’s get the homes all set first. What was your thinking in making the suggestion?”

“As corny as it might sound, Ted, rustlers. Cattle and hogs will be at a premium for the immediate future. I can send Royce and Abel into Reno in the third truck to find the panels and inverters. We could probably move the hogs and livestock tomorrow along with the chickens. I have some boxes in the container that we can fold out and haul the chickens in. We could probably move the chickens and hogs in the first trip and the cattle in the second.”

“I hadn’t thought about people stealing the animals. We could go after the chickens and hogs today. If everyone wants to put in a long day, we can probably even get the cattle today. I wouldn’t mind having some horses to tell you the truth.”

“I’ll tell Royce and Abel to look around town. There are stables, but whether or not any of the horses survived is something we’ll just have to determine. I thought most ranches had horses.”

“Some do and some don’t. We have tack, but the horses got old and we sold them off. I guess that was short sighted, but we didn’t really completely believe a war with the Chinese would really happen.”

“Most people didn’t, Ted. I take it that your wife and you didn’t have a shelter.”

“We had a basement but when Jim and Becky started on this project of theirs, we decided that one large shelter would be enough for all of us. Rather than making our basement into a shelter, it made more sense to concentrate all of our efforts into one place and just plan on a single location.”

“Why here and not on your farm?”

“Half of my farm lies in California. It didn’t make much sense in trying to deal with most of those people.”

“But you did business in both states, right?”

“Of course, a man does business where things are available. Now you take the propane for example. We weren’t likely to get a 10,000-gallon tank in Reno. On the other hand, 9,000-gallons of propane was about all we could expect from Mel. Actually I hadn’t expected that, but John took some of his gold pieces and instead of ending up with a 3,000-gallon tank, Mel gave us an industrial sized tank and a single fill. He told me that he couldn’t refill it but I understand you have something lined up in Reno.”

“What I have lined up is a delivery truck and access to a storage facility. Abel will be driving the truck back tomorrow so we can refill my tank. What we’re going to be short on is fuel, gas and diesel. It would be one thing if a bomb went off and some tanker on the highway stalled out due to EMP, but that rig would probably be hot. I suppose we should look in truck stops and try and find a full tanker.”

“Poop, there was a tanker sitting at the station in Truckee, I didn’t even look to see if it was full or empty. We’ll go right now.”

“I don’t believe that fuel is any good, it has been sitting there since you know when.”

“We need 4 gallons of PRI-D and 4 gallons of PRI-G. We can restore and stabilize the fuel. I’ll have them pick up some in Reno tomorrow.”

“You talk about Reno like it’s a walk in the park. I think we’d better plan on sending someone with Royce and Abel to ride shotgun. Since we have the livestock here, I’ll run the backhoe and we’ll send Jeb and Jim. They can be on the lookout for horses, too.”

o

The following day the 4 men piled into one delivery truck and headed to Reno. They had no more than hit town than they came under fire, even before they got off the interstate. Heavy fire, forcing them to exit the truck and take cover. Abel radioed Gene and asked for backup. Meanwhile the 4 of them returned fire, seriously eroding their supply of ammo. Having 100,000 rounds on the ranch didn’t do them a lot of good; each man had 7 magazines or 140 rounds.

“Abel, where are you guys?”

“Near exit 9. We’re taking fire from the north. We are running low on ammo, too.”

“Anyone hurt?”

“Negative, but that could change.”

“That’s the exit for Robb Drive isn’t it?”

“10-4”

“We’re 5 minutes away.”

“Hurry, I’m out.”

Gene’s delivery truck slid to a stop and John, Ted, Gene, Jake, Bob, David and Jack poured out of the truck. Gene slung a bag of magazines towards the men and they opened fire on the attackers.

“Gene did you bring any M1A magazines?”

“Nope, but I brought Becky’s rifle.”

“Good enough. Ouch, that smarts.”

“Are you shot?”

“Rock chip, I’ll live.”

“What did y’all do to rile these people up?”

“Not one damned thing. Hell we weren’t even all of the way into Reno yet.”

“Can we flank them?”

“No, but if we’re not careful, they’re going to flank us.”

“Screw it, let’s get out of here.”

“I’m all for that.”

◦

“We aren’t going to be able to enter Reno on I-80 anymore. Jim, you’d better plan on using Becky’s rifle or one of mine. And from now on, I want you guys better armed.”

“With what?”

“How about a pair of M-79s?”

“You have some?”

“Four M-79s and an M-60.”

“No damned wonder you have so much 7.62×51mm ammo.”

“I have separate combat loads for the M-60, courtesy of my brother.”

“What brother?”

“The one at Camp Lejeune in the Marine Corps.”

“Call him up and tell him we need couple of LAV-25s.”

“Would that I could. I think you’re going to need to get off at exit 8 and pick up 647/40. Stay on 4th and avoid I-80.”

“Maybe tomorrow. Give one of your FALs and I’ll sight it in. Do you have enough magazines? I forgot to ask.”

“You won’t want over 20 apiece will you? The answer to your question is that I have 200 mags.”

◦

“You’re hurt.”

“It’s just a rock chip. Band-Aid injury. How are the kids?”

“Like a couple of vacuum cleaners. I hope I have enough milk for them.”

“Are you ok, Becky? No bleeding or anything?”

“A little. I’m fine, just tired. How did you get hurt?”

“We went to Reno to look for solar panels, inverters, horses and to pick up the propane delivery truck. Right there where you always exit, exit 9, we came under fire. They were a lot more of them than us so we had to call in backup. Gene and the others got there just in time; we were running out of ammo. I got a FAL from him so we’ll have interchangeable magazines from now on.”

“So the trouble has started?”

“It would appear so, yes. We didn’t get close to whoever it was so we can’t really say if they were bad guys or good guys just protecting their homes. My best guess is the former. Good guys would have defended against an attack and not just attacked a vehicle almost out of rifle range. Anyway, we’re going in tomorrow, get what we need and try to avoid going back.”

“You be careful, huh?”

“Gene has 4 M-79s and an M-60 machine gun. If we all go, I’d imagine that he’d take the M-60. Did you know he had a brother in the Marine Corps?”

“Marilyn didn’t mention it, so no.”

“I’d rather he had an M-240 than that M-60. If the M-60 was any good, they wouldn’t be eliminating them and replacing them with the M-240s. However, it’s what we have so it’s what we’re going to have to use. I’m going to suggest that we check out a couple of military locations in Reno tomorrow.”

“And if you don’t find what you’re looking for?”

“I might make a trip to Carson City.”

“What are you looking for?”

“Some M-240Bs and a heavy machine gun, .50 caliber.”

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“Stop bad mouthing my M-60. It’s E4, not an E3, also called the Mk 43 Mod 0. The guns are made right here in Reno by US Ordnance. They got the bugs out and let me tell you it’s one hell of a lot lighter than the M-240B you want. Even the Special Forces like this model. Why don’t you go to the factory and pick up some more? In July of 2005, the Army ordered \$5.5 million worth of the things.”

Jim had the FAL sighted and had practiced until he could hit a 10” pie plate consistently at 400 meters. He loaded 20 of the magazines and put another 400 rounds of ammo in a backpack. It was all he could carry, but he wasn’t going to be caught short again. Because they were taking a different route into the city, only the 4 of them went. He noticed that everyone had at least 13 magazines and Royce and Abel were each carrying an M-79. They got 3 of the M-60E4s and spare parts. They found 120 of the 125-watt solar panels and nearly filled the back of the truck. They also came up with 3 more 5kw inverters. They dropped Jeb off at the propane dealer’s and he headed home with the filled delivery truck. And they went looking for horses. They found a herd at a stable/farm where the owner had apparently turned them out before he took off. There was only one 4-horse transport so it meant making 4 trips until they had all 15 horses.

“Did you get your M-240 or .50 caliber machine gun?”

“To tell you the truth, I didn’t look. Gene pointed out that the M-60 he had was the latest version and that they were built in the Reno area. I got 3 more of them and some spare parts. We got so busy transporting the horses that I didn’t get a chance to look for the .50 cal.”

“Did you get in a gunfight today, too?”

“Whoever it was yesterday wasn’t there today. It had to have been some bad guys, if it had been good guys, they still should have been in the same place and we should have found them.”

“You mean you looked?”

“Yes, but I had enough ammo today.”

“Here you take Jimmy and burp him. Put a cloth on your shoulder and rub him or pat him gently on the back. I’ll burp Becky.”

“They’re tiny.”

“The way they’re guzzling, they’ll weigh 6 pounds in a week.”

“How much ammo did you take?”

“20 mags and an extra 400 rounds.”

“That was stupid, Jim. I can see you dividing 20 magazines between your LBE and your pack, but twice as much? 800 rounds must weigh 35 pounds.”

“36 plus the weight of the magazines.”

“You may be a super-man, but you’re not Superman. What’s for dinner?”

“Tepid chili.”

“Mom is cooking tonight, huh?”

“I could see it if Marilyn, Susan, Sarah or Mandy made it but what does your mother have against a little hot sauce?”

“A little hot sauce? Nothing. Half a bottle of Tabasco is too much for most people. She only makes it hot enough that Daddy doesn’t need to take Maalox. Honey the chili you make is hot out of the refrigerator. How are they coming with the houses?”

“The water was hooked up today. The septic goes in tomorrow. When the trench is backfilled, they move the trailers and level them. Then all we have to do is install 40 solar panels on each home.”

“How long until everything is done?”

“I suppose one day per home, so about 5 days. And you’re done going to Reno, right?”

“We should go and see if there are any more horses.”

“You said you got 15, right?”

“Right, but we only went 4 places. The animals at the first 3 were dead, locked in their barns. These 15 were let out in a pasture. We can probably check everywhere in one day. Whether or not we can move any we find here in one day depends upon how many we find and whether or not we can find more transports.”

“Has anyone been counting the days?”

“My desktop is counting it down. You be topside in a few days.”

“Sometimes you’re so anal. What’s the radiation level now?”

“70mR.”

“We’re coming up. I’ve had enough. Get someone to help you move the bed.”

“Becky, not yet.”

“Get out of my way James Stewart Young,” she said icily.

o

“Jeb give me a hand moving Becky’s bed.”

“I don’t know she was coming out yet.”

“She wasn’t, but she is. You understand, right?”

“If you say I do, sure.”

“She used my full name, first, middle and last.”

“I get someone to help with the cribs. You’re in trouble bro.”

“Not necessarily, I shut up damned quick and said, yes dear.”

“You’re learning. Hell you might make it to your 1st anniversary. Are you sleeping on the couch?”

“She didn’t say.”

“Lucky you, maybe not.”

“Trouble in paradise?”

“Damn if I know. She wanted upstairs and I objected. You can see who won the argument.”

“She’s a little like her mother, when she gets her mind made up you best get out of the way. Just be thankful she wasn’t holding her rifle.”

“Why?”

“I taught her a couple of moves with the gun butt.”

“Ouch.”

“If you could even talk. They’ll be ok, don’t worry about it. 65mR isn’t very high.”

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“Let’s go looking for the rest of the horses in Reno. I can’t bear the thought of any more of them starving to death.”

“Just the two of us?”

“Why not, we have a radio and can call back if we get into trouble. We’ll take one of those new M-60s and a thumper. We ought to take the pickups and pull the trailer. Chance favors us finding another. I have no idea how much tack Ted has so we’d better bring all of that we find too. Other than that I think we’re pretty well done with Reno.”

“They’re pulling the trailers into place and starting to level them. It will be nice to be out of the shelter little brother.”

“I should get a new couch, it wasn’t very comfortable. How is Mandy doing?”

“Better since she got to talk to her mom.”

“Do you want to pull the trailer or should I?”

“You pull it and I’ll take the M-60 to cover you.”

o

“Jim, hold up.”

“Why are you whispering?”

"I don't have any idea. There are people on that horse ranch. We better go slow and easy."

"Help you?"

"Name's Jim Young and that my brother Jeb. We rescued some horses yesterday and figured we'd better see if any more were abandoned. Do you have many horses?"

"Whatever you see. This isn't my ranch. Take the horses if you want them, I don't ride. Leave those cattle alone though, I have a family to feed."

"Are you sure you don't want the horses, Mister? What are you going to do when you run out of fuel? Can you tell me what happened to the people who owned this ranch?"

"Found 'em dead and I buried them. Do you want those horses or not?"

"Yes. Ok if we take the trailer?"

"Isn't mine, don't care. Take the saddles and whatever you want, except for the cattle."

"Thanks."

"Don't mention it."

"I don't believe I caught your name."

"Didn't give it."

"Sorry."

"Jeb you get that trailer and I'll look for the saddles. Then we'll load the horses and be on our way."

"Ok."

"Gene, are you monitoring the radio?"

"This is Becky. What's up?"

"We're at a place called Harmony Farms. There is something very wrong here, but I'm not sure what. Tell Gene we need backup. We take as long as possible to load the horses."

"What's the address?"

"2955 Rhodes Road. It's about 10 miles south of town on 395."

“It will take them at least 30 minutes.”

“If we can’t wait, we’ll meet them a little north on 395.”

“10-4.”

“Who were you talking to?”

“My wife. I told her we found some horses and would be home shortly.”

“Be quick about it, I can’t stand around all day waiting for you to load those horses.”

“We’re moving as fast as we can, sorry.”

Jeb had the trailer hooked up and they both looked for tack. It went into the back of the pickups and they couldn’t stall any longer. They loaded the horses, waived to the man and left the ranch. Jeb and Jim weren’t more than 3 miles up 395 when they ran into one of Gene’s delivery trucks.

“What do you have?”

“I don’t know Gene. The guy sure seemed anxious for us to be out of there. He admitted that he didn’t live there and told us to take anything we wanted, except the cattle. He was very emphatic about that.”

“Maybe we’d better check this place out.”

“We only saw the one man, but he mentioned a family. Wouldn’t give me his name. Said he found the people who owned the ranch dead and buried them.”

“It’s probably nothing, but as long as we’re here, I suppose we ought to check it out. I guess that I better put on my badge.”

“What badge?”

“Washoe County Sheriff’s Active Reserve Deputy Sheriff badge. We have to work 2 8-hour shifts minimum a month and attend a meeting. I got into it because of search and rescue work.”

“Is that what you meant by friends?”

“Peace officers can own automatic weapons.”

“What about the grenades?”

"I had flares and smoke grenades for search and rescue. My kid brother saw them and shipped me the high explosive grenades."

"Before we go any further, do you have any more surprises?"

"Well... You don't have a need to know, yet. Let's go check on this fella."

o

"Washoe County Sheriff's Department, may I please see some ID?"

"What did I do?"

"Transferring property that didn't belong to you to another person, for starters. The ID, please."

"Are you a real Deputy?"

"Active Reserve Deputy, yes. I'm a sworn officer, the ID please."

"If I don't have any?"

"That's it. You are under arrest for interference with a peace officer," Gene said, grabbing the man's arm. The man yanked his arm free. Gene clubbed him with his pistol, handcuffed him and leaned him against a tree.

"Keep an eye on this fella and I'll check out the house."

"Crap. Did he tell you he buried them?"

"That's what he said."

"They must have dug themselves back up and started bleeding again. I found this pistol in the house. There are 4 rounds missing from the magazine and two dead people, both shot twice. They couldn't have been dead more than an hour. They're still warm and rigor has barely set in."

"What are you going to do with him?"

"Do you want to feed him for a few months until the military shows up?"

"Not particularly, no."

"Did you shoot them?"

"Yeah, I just wanted something to eat."

“What about your family?”

“Don’t have one.”

“Wrong answers.” Bam...

“Let’s get these 3 people buried and get back to the ranch.”

“Uh, just like that?”

“He said he did it. He was obviously a looter trying to steal food.”

“Little brother, just like that – nice fella your boss.”

◦

“What happened?”

“Gene shot him.”

“Shot who?”

“The guy I called about. It seems he murdered the man and the woman who owned the ranch.”

“Did the man admit it?”

“He said he was hungry.”

“And?”

“Gene is a Reserve Deputy Sheriff. He simply shot the guy, plop.”

“Didn’t you try and stop him?”

“I guess I could have. He asked me if I wanted to feed the guy for several months until the military showed up. I said no. He questioned the guy and killed him when he admitted he did it and didn’t have a family.”

“What would you do if someone attacked me and our children?”

“I’d kill them...”

“I don’t think that man will kill anyone else, do you?”

“No.”

◦

Nuclear weapons do funny things to rules. You suddenly get a new set of rules when there isn't any operative justice system and no military around to deal with the lawless. A person has to ask himself, *Do I want to take food out of my families' mouth to feed this piece of crap?* The answer isn't difficult to arrive at, is it? If you don't choose to be judge, jury and executioner, don't worry about it, someone else will, unless that piece of crap kills them too. In the end, the good guys usually win. They may lose a few battles, but they win the war. Usually. You should never violate rule 6, like that piece of crap did. Other rules seem to get broken, too. A 40mm grenade is a destructive device and I can't really say that a peace office is permitted to have destructive devices.

The problem with Jim picking up the 3 M-60E4 machine guns was that they used belted ammo. Generally hardware and ammo are stored separately by the military. However, anyone who reads this stuff knows by now, the US Army maintains a tier II ammo reserve at Hawthorne, Nevada. If you take I-80 to US 50 to US 95, you should be in Hawthorne in a couple of hours. The ammunition for both the M-60 and the M-240 is issued in a disintegrating, metallic, split-linked NATO standard belt that are interchangeable. One truckload of the 7.62x51mm belted ammo should last them a long time.

◦

The German Chancellor's office announced today that Germany would not be withdrawing from NATO. Concerns over Germany's membership lead to Parliament being dissolved and new elections. All German military forces have now withdrawn from France and the reconstituted UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to censure France for its incursion into German territory.

Loss of its oil revenues from the People's Republic of China prompted OPEC oil ministers to call for increased production to offset sagging revenues. One observer noted that when demand is high production is cut and prices raised. The converse can now be seen to be occurring. While Chinese demand has totally evaporated, US demand is off too. The loss of a portion of the refining capacity due to the nuclear attack on the US by China sharply cut the US refining capacity. However, given the ongoing martial law and travel restrictions, remaining refinery capacity is keeping pace with demand. Current supplies of #2 diesel fuel are restricted to military and transportation industry needs. Nominal amounts of gasoline and diesel fuel are also available to local and state law enforcement on a sharply limited basis. Sparsely populated western states only have limited amounts available in the state capitals.

To date, the United States military and the federalized National Guard units have been unable to affect rescue operations in the heart of the cities attacked. A White House spokesman indicated that the death toll is now expected to exceed 50 million. A military source told CNN that the warheads used by the Chinese were particularly dirty.

In the Far East an epidemic of unknown proportions is striking the Chinese survivors of the US and Russian retaliatory strikes. The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control have each issued statements urging people to avoid contact with other survivors where possible. In cases where this is impossible due to circumstances, use of the N-95 and N-100 facemasks is urged. The illness has every appearance of being related to the avian influenza A (H5N1) that had a significant outbreak in 2004/2005 in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia. During 2004, 24 laboratory confirmed deaths were reported by the WHO and during 2005, another 83 deaths for a total of 107. Outbreaks of Cholera and Dysentery have continued to rise in this country due to poor sanitation and contaminated water supplies.

Electrical utilities are slowly being returned, however demand greatly exceeds supply even taking the loss 11 metropolitan areas into consideration. Canada, a major supplier of natural gas to this country has sharply curtailed the volume of gas shipped due to an inability of American purchasers to pay for their product.

In a related matter, a Whitehouse Spokesman said that legislation is being prepared for consideration by the Congress to return this county to the Gold standard. Several Democratic Senators and Members of the House stated their opposition to the proposed legislation, citing Franklin Roosevelt's removal of that standard in the 1930s.

A White House Spokesman said an agreement had been reached to temporarily relocate the federal government to Atlanta. A small group of protestors marched in silent protest carrying signs outside of the Atlanta federal building that said 'Yankee Go Home'. If the question were asked, "Who was and still is the most hated and despised man in the history of Georgia" the response would be William Tecumseh Sherman. With four Corps of troops in two columns, in November 1864, Sherman began his infamous March to the Sea. Prior to leaving Atlanta, he set fire to munitions factories, railroad yards, clothing mills, and other targets that could be resourceful to the Confederacy. Sherman never intended to burn the whole city, but the fire got out of hand and spread throughout the city.

NOAA announced that the average temperature over the past 3 months had fallen 5° Celsius. A shortened growing season is anticipated for the next two years followed by hot dry conditions for an even longer period. This has raised concerns about the available supply of home heating oil and natural gas in the northern tier of states.

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“Some of you may think my action yesterday harsh. So be it. The man admitted his wrongdoing and in case you haven't noticed, there is a general absence of any legal authority in the area. We could have taken him to jail, but that would have meant several of us guarding him. We could have brought him here, but that would have only changed the location. In any event, we would have had to feed him, using our precious supplies just to keep him alive until the Army showed up. Whether you agree with me or not, I did

what had to be done and given the same circumstance, I'd do it again. I strongly recommend that we only leave the farm in the event that we need to salvage for desperately needed supplies."

Gene's speech was met with silence. Most agreed that given the circumstances, Gene was right. It was so foreign to their way living before however. Peace officers were expected to protect the rights of the accused. Even 100 or 200 years before a man got his day in court before they hanged him. It would take some getting used to...

The first two homes were leveled and connected to everything. Jim and Jeb worked installing the solar panels on Jeb and Mandy's new home. The batteries were stored on pallets under each trailer. Ted told them he'd do the wiring the following day and Jeb and Mandy could move in. The next day the next two homes were leveled and plumbed. It took 6 days to have the homes ready to occupy, the last step being the installation of the inverters and wiring the electrical system together. A 100-amp automatic transfer switch was installed on the outside of each mobile home. Any one of the 5 switches, connected in parallel to a central relay, could activate the generator. Despite having dishwashers and garbage disposals, they weren't used because of the amount of power they required and the septic systems.

"You burn wood in your furnace and kitchen stove, right?"

"That's right Gene, and we need to think about getting more wood, I'm down to a cord."

"Do you have a chainsaw?"

"Two, one with a long blade for felling and a second with a short blade for trimming the trees."

"Do you have a log splitter or do you do that the old fashioned way?"

"Dad bought a hydraulic splitter, but I still have to split kindling for the kitchen stove."

"Where do you get your wood?"

"From that parcel of land to the west of Ted's back 40. In the past we've always just cut the logs and hauled them here before cutting them to length and splitting them."

"I was thinking that you might want to consider doing that now before we try and plant. It's your place so it's entirely up to you, but once the weather warms up we'll probably want to stay close to home. Until the military shows up, I think that everyone should keep a weapon handy. As it gets warmer, there are going to be a whole lot of people out foraging."

"What about security?"

“Every man here is a veteran, right?”

“Except for Jeb, he volunteered but was 4F.”

“I suppose that everyone age 15 and up is going to have to participate in defending the farm. Who is the best firearms teacher?”

“Probably Ted. He taught Becky and she’s one hell of a marksman.”

“Fine, Ted will have to bring every person up to speed on firearms use. We can probably give the kids the M16s, how many do you have?”

“Eight. Ted has 5, dad 1 and Becky and I each have 1.”

“I have several M1911s. They might be too much gun for the young people.”

“How do you do it Gene? A dozen combat rifles, 2 trailer loads of food, handguns and enough ammo for a couple of wars.”

“I’m been doing this preparation bit since I got out of the Corps and took over my father’s business. Marilyn and I always put being prepared first and everything else second. I started taking the bents and dents myself in the beginning. We were very frugal, even though I ended up owing the business. I made a killing on the dotcom thing and used the money to buy the weapons and other things we hadn’t been able to afford. I know you may think that’s a lot of ammo, but when you consider practice, a combat situation or two, we might run out eventually. Since you didn’t come up with a heavy machine gun, those M-60s and our 40mm grenades are our heaviest firepower.”

“Becky and I didn’t have near the preparations Marilyn and you had.”

“You would have, in time. I’m 15 years older and started out with the business. You had a damned good start with that shelter of yours. From what I’ve seen of your firearms, you have enough and knew how to use them. I took Abel and Royce in because they were smart enough to come to my house. I’m damned if I know what I’d have done if more people showed up. Taken them in, probably, but it was cramped enough as it was, considering how long we had to shelter.”

“I suppose I made our shelter too large, Gene. It has more than 2,000 ft². By the time the attack warning came, we had enough food for over a year. If anything, the shelter’s greatest shortcoming was having enough fuel for the generator. Ted had that 1,500-gallon skid tank and it took over \$4,000 just to fill it.”

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“How’s my family doing?”

“Good now that we’re out of that hole in the ground. I would have probably felt the same way being confined to my own bedroom, but at least the bedroom has windows. You need to split wood for the kitchen stove again.”

“Ok. We’re going to harvest our firewood early. Gene suggested that once it warms up we could have trouble. You’ve gained weight, it looks good.”

“It won’t last. Once I wean the kids, I’ll resume my exercise program and work on the figure. I also need to get to the range. I haven’t fired any of my guns in 4 months. How many horses did Jeb and you end up with?”

“15 at the first farm and 8 at the second, 23. Between the tack your dad had and what we gathered, we have enough saddles for 18. The next time we go to Reno, we’ll check the farm where we got the first 15 and get that tack.”

“Are we going to be ok?”

“We have food and the means to produce more. We have fuel. We have weapons and ammo. About the only thing we don’t have are a lot of people. We’ll be ok unless a really large group was to locate the farm and try to take what we have. Then, who knows?”

“I only got a 6 months’ supply of everyone’s prescriptions. I’ll go with you the next time you go to Reno and we’ll go through the hospital pharmacy and get more. You’re going to need to figure some way to get into the pharmacy; it’s built like a bank vault. We’d better do that soon, before someone beats us to it.”

“Do you want to go tomorrow? I need to pick up the tack from that farm.”

“I’ll head to the range and do a little practice; our mothers can watch the kids. You coming?”

“Yeah, give me a minute. We’re going to have to go after those cattle tomorrow. Three dairy cows and a bull. What do you think, should we start making cheese?”

“Can’t we drink the milk?”

Jim and Becky – Chapter 5 – Military

“Not really, I have no idea how much Strontium-90 will be in the milk. We have enough infant formula for the babies. If I remember correctly, absorption is higher, about 60%, in children in their first year of life. Since it has a half-life of 29 years, we can't totally avoid it.”

Jim had practiced, Becky hadn't. She still managed to out shoot him. Ted had most of the young people on the range learning to shoot the M16s. The boys would probably graduate to the FAL rifles and leave the M16s for the women. It wasn't sexist, women generally tend to weigh less than men and they're frequently better shots. The lighter recoil of the M16s was better suited to the women and since they were better shots, the small bullet didn't matter quite so much.

“I understand that you're planning on going to Reno tomorrow.”

“That's right; we're going to pick up the tack from the first horse farm, medications from the hospital pharmacy and those 4 cattle we left at the other farm.”

“I think maybe I'll ride along. Would you be opposed to going by the Sheriff's Department?”

“It shouldn't be a problem. Looking for something?”

“Yes, the Sheriff and the fulltime Deputies. We haven't seen any law enforcement in 3 months and that's not right. The Reno PD has almost 400 sworn positions and the Sheriff nearly as many. Unless aliens came along and abducted 200,000 people, something is very, very wrong.”

“We know that some have been killed and many obviously left the city. Reno was in the direct path of the fallout from San Francisco.”

“Even if the PD and Sheriff's Department evacuated, they would have left a few officers around to protect the city. We haven't seen any and I'm going to look. Those people who attacked you the first time you went into town might be responsible.”

“Why didn't you folks have any problems when you got your things around and moved here?”

“I didn't take the time to check on the cops.”

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“I think this explains some of what happened,” Jim said handing the handbill to Gene.

“Evacuation Instructions for Reno, Nevada. Huh, this indicates that they were trying to move the entire population east and south. I guess that explains the absence of people and vehicles. It doesn’t explain the absence of law enforcement.”

“We need to check the Police Department and the Sheriff’s office.”

“I wonder what they did with the inmates at the jail.”

“Do you want to check there first?”

“Load the rest of that tack and we’ll go there next.”

“Damn it all to hell, look,” Gene exclaimed.

“Becky, lock and load.”

“You probably don’t need to do that Jim, these people are a long time dead. They’re the Bailiffs and the people who operated the jail. There are some dead inmates over there and there. They probably cut staff to a bare minimum because of the radiation. The bodies have been stripped so the inmates are armed. That may be who fired on you guys a while back. Let’s check and see if they managed to break into the armory.”

“That door? It appears intact. What’s in there?”

“Spare weapons, ammo, equipment. They obviously tried to batter it down. I know where I can get a key, hang on.”

“Empty. I guess that makes sense, they took everything with them. Let’s go get the cattle.”

“What about these officers?”

“Jim, we can’t take time. That’s especially true since we know there are some inmates from the jail running loose. I call the ranch and tell them to keep their guard up.”

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“So they evacuated Reno? I can’t see how they accomplished that in only a few hours.”

“They would have had almost a day, Dad. Most people could have used their personal vehicles and tourists and people without transportation could have been transported by bus or school bus. I don’t know about the milk from those cows so we’d better destroy it or make it into cheese.”

“We’ll make cheese. Ted has some starters somewhere. We can’t really afford to waste any food. It could be a while before this country pulls itself back together. I’m going to

see Becky and see if she got any Nexium or Prevacid. My gut has been giving me fits for weeks now.”

“Take your pick, John, pink and black or purple.”

“What do you have the most of?”

“Pink and black, Prevacid.”

“Give me some of those. I think I have an ulcer. How are my grandchildren doing?”

“Eating, pooping and growing.”

“I don’t do diapers.”

“We have more than enough help. You have 3 to spoil, all at the same time.”

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The next few days were spent harvesting deadfalls and cutting down standing dead trees. They noticed that the weather was much colder than usual and snow closed many of the roads. At the end of the week, they had 40 logs and while Jeb cut up the branches, Jim sawed the logs to length. The pines wouldn’t generate as much heat as the hardwoods, but hardwoods were scarce.

“It appears that we have enough wood to cut up 10 or 11 cords. That should keep us in wood through the summer and well into next winter. I wonder when the military is going to show up.”

“I imagine it will be soon, they’ll get to get supplies into Reno before they can move the people back from wherever they went to. One of the kids said she saw a HMMWV on I-80 day before yesterday.”

“Do you want to go into Reno and see?”

“Nah. They can see our smoke or condensation from the highway. Let them come here.”

“This is one of the nastiest winters I can remember in a long time. March came in like a lion. It would be nice if it went out like a lamb.”

“I wouldn’t count on that Jim. It may well be into June before we can plant. How many acres does your farm have?”

“80. It used to be bigger but I-80 cut it and Dad sold the land off. He had intended to buy more land north and south, but it wasn’t for sale. Since Becky and I worked in Reno, all

we did was let the grass grow. The 80 acres is fenced but not subdivided with fences. We have more than enough grass for the cattle and horses. The back fence is the California state line, or close to it. The ground isn't really level enough to farm. Dad ran a few cattle and some hogs when we were growing up, but he sold them off while I was in Iraq. Then he got rid of the chickens and they were living on their investments. He was in the dotcoms, too, but probably not as big as you were. Multiplied the money from the other land about 5 times over so they were more than comfortable. He's had stomach problems on and off for years."

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"Vehicles coming?"

"Who or what are they?"

"HMMWVs. I guess the military has arrived."

"I'm Lt. Ron Matthews and this is Master Sergeant Owen Smith. We're with the Nevada National Guard, 99th Troop Command, Reno."

"Lieutenant, Sergeant, I'm Jim Young. Come into the house and I'll make introductions."

That lady there is my wife Becky. The man next to her is her father Ted Baker and the woman, her mother Sally. Next to her are my mother, Glenda and then my father, John. Next to my father are my brother Jeb and his wife Mandy. That fella there is Gene Knowles, his wife Marilyn and children Jake, Bob and David. The next couple is Royce Benson, his wife Susan and children Jack and Janice. Finally, we have Abel Cain, his wife Sarah and children Ramona, Sheila and Elizabeth. There are also three infants upstairs in the bedroom sleeping."

"So you have 28 people all together?"

"Yes."

"We're doing a quick census and checking on people's needs. Do you know anything about some dead Sheriff's Deputies in Reno?"

"Lt. Matthews, I'm Gene Knowles. I'm an active reserve Deputy with the Sheriff's Department and can probably answer your questions. About a week ago, we went the jail to check on law enforcement. We had just discovered the evacuation notice. We left things exactly as we found them. From outward appearances, the inmates broke out and killed the Bailiffs. Some weeks earlier when we were going into town to pick up supplies, a group of our people came under fire. Later, we came across a fellow who had just murdered a couple at Harmony Farms about 10 miles south on 395. He resisted and was killed. We buried those bodies, but I was leery of remaining in Reno when we found the Bailiffs. Other than that, I guess I don't have much to tell you."

“These mobile homes outside, scavenged?”

“Actually, no. I have the bills of sale in my papers on all of them. I have papers on nearly everything you see. Jim worked for me and we sheltered Abel, Royce and my family in Reno. We came out here to Jim’s farm after.”

“Is any of the beef for sale Mr. Young?”

“I can let you have the bull and 3 dairy cows.”

“The going market rate is \$1.75 a pound, will that be acceptable? The voucher is redeemable in gold.”

“Yes, that will be acceptable. However, we won’t be able to spare additional livestock.”

“Still, that will help. Most of the residents were evacuated to Area 51, you’ve heard of it right? If you can deliver the beef to Reno, we can weigh it and issue your voucher. You can turn it into the paymaster and he’ll issue you Gold American Eagles.”

“What is gold running these days?”

“\$1,200 an ounce.”

“Silver?”

“\$20.”

“We can bring the livestock in tomorrow. Where do you want it delivered?”

“Bring it to the old Nugget Meat Packers in Sparks. That place closed up in 2003 but we’ve reopened it to process food for the residents who are returning. Do you folks require anything?”

“Just some assurance that the area is secure and we don’t need to worry about marauders.”

“We’re doing what we can. A lot of people have moved in from California trying to escape the radiation from San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. I assume you’re armed?”

“Oh yes. But as you can see, there aren’t many of us.”

“I see antennas; I presume that you have communications equipment.”

“We do, yes.”

“Sergeant Smith will give you a list of frequencies you can reach us on. If your radio equipment won’t use any of those frequencies, let us know. Reno was a Signal Unit, too, and we can modify your equipment.”

“Maybe you can send out a technician and modify our ham radios? We can’t reach any military frequencies.”

“I’ll send someone tomorrow. Do you have any idea what time you will be in Sparks?”

“Eight am tomorrow.”

“Fine. Thanks folks.”

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“Not bad, 7,875 pounds of tough meat at \$1.75 a pound. \$13,781.25. We ended up with 11.4 ounces of gold and the equivalent of 0.084375 ounces of gold in silver.”

“What do you intend to do about the horses you rescued?”

“Nothing, keep them. We rescued and fed them. I don’t think this is over by a long shot.”

“How much did your father pay for that gold he bought when he cleaned out his bank accounts?”

“Less than \$500 an ounce, Gene. I have 4 Krugerrands myself that I bought in the \$300s, not to mention a substantial amount of 90% silver coin. We all have some gold and silver. It would appear that our fortunes have improved considerably.”

“Possibly, but you can bet that food and manufactured goods are going to be at a premium.”

“I agree, but what do we need? I may go into Reno once the people return and start buying firearms and pay for them in gold and silver. I’ll just bet that some people, especially Californians will part with their weapons in a heartbeat.”

“What are you going to buy? We have an ample supply of military firearms.”

“Cowboy guns. There won’t be any fast draw competitions in the foreseeable future. I think that from now on I’m going to raise livestock and supply meat to the military. All of Ted’s cattle were bred by that bull we sold so I think we can build a herd. It might be lean pickings for a year or two, but eventually I might build a cattle empire like John Chisum. 8 pregnant heifers is a pretty good start. I didn’t know that you owned those mobile homes.”

“You didn’t need to know. That’s why they were sitting on the guy’s lots, he and I had a deal. I bought them under the condition that I could store them there and he’d use them as demos. Got them dirt-cheap that way, literally at cost. I also have papers on those 2 homes they brought back from Truckee so your brother and Becky’s dad don’t need to worry about that. There was no way that I could store everything I might need for an emergency. So I managed to buy the trailers cheap and get free storage in exchange for allowing people to view the homes. If the military gets that packing plant going again, maybe I’ll buy it and use it to process your beef. That and whatever else I can buy. If you can raise grain on Ted’s farm, I’ll buy it from you folks. It’s going to be damned difficult to reestablish my wholesale grocery business.”

“Once we get to breeding cattle, we’re going to have a ton of milk, literally. I can supply milk and cheese, too.”

It was a long way from where they were to where they were talking about going. Eight pregnant heifers and four pregnant hogs didn’t constitute a herd by any means. Maybe the pigs would, with litters averaging 10 or more they’d have a lot of pork chops. Assuming 50/50 on the cattle, they’d have 12 heifers the following year and maybe 18 the year after. He’d have perhaps 300 cows in 10 years; he was never going to be another John Chisum, unless he bought a heifer for every steer he sold. If Jim did that, it became a geometric progression 2^n where n equaled the number of generations. (8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, 1024, 2048, 4096) Yeah right, on 80 acres.

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The numbers were mind-boggling but they were just that, numbers on a piece of paper. There were so many assumptions built into those numbers that they didn’t merit much consideration. They assumed all of the heifers produced a healthy calf, that he could replace the steers they ate or sold with additional heifers, that none were stolen by rustlers or killed by a predator. Plus it was a 10-year projection and he’d need one hell of a lot more land unless he could dry lot the cattle. But NOAA had said 2 years of cold and then hot and dry for an extended period. They might be lucky to grow enough for them to eat. It was something to shoot for, nothing more.

“The military guy is here, the one who’s going to fix the radios.”

“Hey Corporal, is this going to be easy, or complicated?”

“What do you have for radios?”

“A TS-2000 and a Yaesu FTDX9000MP. There is also a Yaesu mobile, it’s a FT-817 and a 2-meter rig, a Yaesu FT-2800M.”

“Pretty fancy equipment, top of the line. It will be easy to make them all frequency transceivers. I need about 5 minutes. The Yaesu 9000 is a 400-watt radio you know. A guy doesn’t really need an amplifier with that. Why the 2 brands?”

“The Yaesu stuff belongs to my boss and the Kenwood is mine.”

“This stuff won’t interface with the SINCGARS; that’s encrypted.”

“I know. I was in the Army and all but one of the men here are veterans.”

“Really, when?”

“My father and father-in-law were in the Army in Vietnam in the early 70s. The boss was in the Corps in the ‘80s. I did Iraqi Freedom and I can’t tell you the branch or service period of the other two.”

“I’m done. They cover every frequency now from the bottom to the top. Crank in the frequency you want, tune the antenna and let ‘em rip.”

“Thanks Corporal, we appreciate that. How are things going in Reno?”

“We brought in some food, but we’re going to need several more semi loads just to refill the shelves in the grocery stores. People have started to drift back, a few hundred at a time. We brought in some of those large generators to use until the power is back. There isn’t any natural gas and that doesn’t look good at the moment.”

“I wanted to set up a stand or something and see if I could buy some used firearms. Do I need a permit or anything?”

“Nah you just fill out the transfer document in triplicate and give one to the seller, one to us and keep the third. It’s a streamlined procedure and all we do is check and make sure the weapon wasn’t reported stolen.”

“And if it is?”

“Tough. You have to surrender the weapon. Might be a good idea to ask the seller a few questions. Local LEOs will have a copy of the list.”

“Ok, I’ll have to get a copy. One of the people here is a Reserve Deputy.”

“Oh, you’re the people who discovered the jail break. Why didn’t you leave with everyone else?”

“We had shelters and buttoned up before we knew about any evacuation.”

“I’ve got to go. They told me to be back in an hour. Take care.”

“Thanks, Corporal.”

“Radios ready?”

“He modified all 3 of the HF radios.”

“Two minutes apiece, right?”

“About that.”

“You don’t know about the Japanese radios? They’re capable of being converted to all frequency radios quickly. Usually it just takes knowing where to melt a fusible link or something. At least the higher priced radios are, or so I’ve heard.”

“Your base unit is 400 watts?”

“Yes, but I don’t have a 1,500 watt linear amp. And I have to have an external power supply.”

“Shall we leave my radio here and put yours in the house or your trailer?”

“Since you have a basement tunnel, why not put yours in your house as command central or something and we’ll put mine in the trailer as backup. We can put in extra antenna switches and run some of the RG-8 coax.”

“Ok. Maybe Becky and Mandy can run the radios and set up a nursery in the living room.”

“I heard that Mandy isn’t big on guns.”

“You heard right, but I think that Becky will snap her out of that, she has a baby to protect now. That Corporal said that local LEOs would have a copy of a list of stolen firearms. I’m going to need a copy if I’m going to try and buy some guns.”

“I’ll talk to someone in the Department and get you a copy. Give me a day or so. What do you plan to pay for those guns?”

“I’ll probably offer MSRP if they’re like new and discount appropriately depending on condition. I have some price lists on my computer. Who do you know that deals in western style leather, holsters, cartridge belts and scabbards?”

“Look in the Yellow Pages, there must be a dozen different vendors.”

“You know despite the technology, things are really going to change around here. Reno was primarily a tourist trap. The Corporal said they’re putting in temporary generators but natural gas is going to be a problem. With electricity they’ll have lights, water and sewer, but without natural gas, no heat. With summer not that far off it won’t be a prob-

lem now, but it could be in the fall. And I really can't see people coming to Reno to party since martial law is still in effect. This town is in for some very tough times."

"I've been thinking about my wholesale business. It's going to be 2 or 3 years before I can get that going again, if I can at all. I guess maybe I'll work for you if you can use some ranch hands."

"Ever run a tractor?"

"I can learn and Abel and Royce can too. You're mom bakes a mean loaf of bread and we have a total of 7 ovens counting your stove in the shelter. Do you think we could bake bread and sell it in Reno?"

"I'll mention it to mom. If she's willing, the other wives will still need to be talked into doing it. There really isn't that much flour so it would probably end up being whole wheat."

"I have some used commercial loaf pans on my supply trailer, enough so they could all bake 8 loaves at a time. I'm a really a pack rat when you get right down to it, Jim. I never passed up on a chance to buy something used, if I could find it. I have all of the bread ingredients including gluten. There might be more flour in that container that you'd imagine. I stored some of it in those blue water barrels."

"Sounds to me like they could make 100 extra loaves a day. And there will be our garden. We might even be able to do a little truck farming if we have enough seed and everything. What do you think they could sell the homemade bread for?"

"Might bring \$4 a loaf. But it's going to be a lot of work, grinding the wheat, making a couple of batches a day and getting it to town while it's still fresh."

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"So that's what Gene and I discussed. Setting up the communications center in the living room and putting in a nursery. If you're willing, Mandy and you could man the radios and still have a lot of free time to take care of the 3 babies. Gene also suggested baking bread. He has most if not all of the ingredients and I calculated that mom and the others could bake 112 loaves a day, 5 days a week. It could easily generate a couple of thousand dollars a week. We can put in a much larger garden and sell fresh produce when it comes in. I'm only guessing but we could probably sell all we can produce."

"I'm willing to man the radios. Are you going to move your equipment upstairs?"

"Yes and it can be switched from the same antennas. Then if, God forbid, we have to go back in the shelter for any reason, all we'd have to do is move the equipment."

"I'll talk to Mandy. I'm sure she'd rather than do that than pull guard duty."

“Is she going to be ok using a weapon if push comes to shove?”

“We won’t really know until that happens, but I did talk to her about protecting David. Jeb did too. I think she would go with a handgun but I’m not too sure about the rifle. She shoots the M16 ok, so in the end, I’d let her cover my back. What else did you two talk about?”

“Him working for me as a ranch hand.”

“That should prove interesting. Are you planning on selling sliced bread?”

“We don’t have the plastic bags. We’ll sell whole loaves like they do in some bakeries and they can slice their own. It will keep that better that way, too.”

“Have you talked to your mother about this bread thing?”

“She said she’s willing, provided she doesn’t end up doing all of the baking.”

“Maybe she could make her squaw bread recipe. The loaves are the same size.”

“Possibly. That depends if we get it off the ground. I’m going to be buying some guns, just so you know.”

“What?”

“Lever action rifles and single action revolvers.”

“Somehow, that figures. Does every man want to be a cowboy?”

“Some grow out of it, so I don’t suppose so.”

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One week later...

“Does everyone have everything they need, mom?”

We have a good recipe and they’re all turning out good bread. Gene put a barrel of flour and the other things in every trailer and our kitchen. Have you cleared it with the National Guard?”

“We can set up for 2 hours a day, Monday through Friday. I’ll be there Monday, Wednesday and Friday trying to buy used guns. The Lieutenant told me that as long as the paperwork is in order and I get ID, there wouldn’t be any problem. I’m not really looking for that many weapons, maybe 30 rifles and 30 revolvers. I located the holsters,

gun belts and ammo. After I get done with the guns, I'll be the one taking the bread in daily."

"Do you want us to bake one day ahead? We could bake Sunday through Thursday and sell it Monday through Friday mornings. It would still be very fresh."

"If you'd prefer to do it that way, I don't mind."

"If we do, we won't have to start so early each morning."

"Fine we'll do it that way. Becky suggested that you bake your squaw bread. It will bring the same price. I made some signs, what do you think?"

FIREARMS WANTED

.45 COLT CALIBER FIREARMS
WINCHESTER RIFLES, SINGLE ACTION REVOLVERS
WE PAY IN GOLD AND SILVER

HOMEMADE BREAD

WHITE OR WHOLE WHEAT
1½ POUND LOAF
30¢ Face value pre-1965 silver, or
2 - ¼th ounce silver ingots

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A bag of pre-65 circulated silver coins contains 10,000 dimes, 4,000 quarters or 2,000 half dollars and contains about 715-720 ounces of silver. That meant that at \$20 an ounce a dime was worth ~\$1.50, a quarter ~\$3.75 and a half ~\$7.50. The one ounce gold coins were \$1,200, the half-ounce \$600, the quarter ounce \$300 and the tenth ounce \$120. By the roll, dimes were worth ~\$75, quarters ~\$150 and halves ~\$300.

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"Good Luck. I think we'll start out with a half batch, 56 loaves. It's going to take people a while to get used to paying in gold and silver. I'm not sure many people will have much of it either."

"Ok mom. You might be surprised at how many of those old coins your generation has. There are more retired Californians in Reno than native Nevadans. Since Reno is a haven for cowboy action shooting, I ought to be able to do well on the firearms. Once I can buy a few firearms, silver coins will start to circulate."

It looked fine on paper but what would the reality be? The bread sold out in an hour and in 2 hours, Jim had 3 revolvers and one rifle. All of the transactions were handled in the old silver coins. He'd been right; there had been many people with manila envelopes containing the old silver. He declined all but .45 Colt caliber weapons because ammo could be a problem. After the first day, Jim went to the farmer's market 5 days a week with 100-105 loaves of bread and a bag of silver coins, taking Ramona and Shelia to handle the bread sales.

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"How big of a garden did you figure on?"

"Can't say, Jim, we have 25 mouths to feed. Your mother and I have been talking with Ted and Sally about it. The thing is, we're short on canning jars, lids and they're going to be very busy trying to bake bread and can at the same time. We'll need more of the pressure cookers, too; we only have the 3, yours, ours and Sally's."

"If we're going to plant sets, we should rig up a greenhouse to start those plants in."

"Gene went to Reno looking for PVC pipe and cement. He had 2 rolls of 4 mil plastic in that container of his. I suppose we'll try and plant 3½ acres."

"I figured he'd have canning jars on his trailer."

"He does, but not enough. How about you put up a sign and buy used jars? He said he'd find the pressure cookers and lids."

"Here, I have a present for you. That's the Winchester legacy rifle and the revolver is a Ruger Vaquero on the Blackhawk frame. There's a box of leather goods in the living room so you can get whatever you need in the way of a holster, gun belt and scabbard. When you see Ted and Jeb, tell them I have guns for them, too. They're your saddle guns. The truth is, in a fight, they wouldn't be worth a crap and you'd spend way too much time reloading. They're as much novelty items as anything."

"Your brother has the horses matched to saddles and ridden enough to settle them down. Many people back in Reno?"

"They're bringing in busloads of people and doing their best to stock the grocery stores. Food is still in short supply and fuel nearly non-existent. The Guard doesn't really have enough people to patrol, even with the Sheriff and the RPD bringing some of their people back. There isn't enough generating capacity for the entire city so multi-family housing is getting preference."

"Are you getting along with Lt. Matthews?"

“Yeah, he’s a local boy and that Sgt. Smith sits on him when he gets squirrely. The RPD is trying to hire extra reserve officers. They’re paying \$22, \$24 and \$26 per hour, depending on the shift.”

“And?”

“I’m thinking about it. 2 shifts a week would bring in another \$350-\$400. I could work 2nd or 3rd shift and still put in a full day here. It would also make these automatic weapons legal.”

“Have you talked to your wife about it?”

“I’m working up the courage. I can’t imagine that she’ll be too happy about it.”

“What’s the downside?”

“That avian virus has somehow made to this country and they don’t have an immunization. There has been some looting and soldiers and officers being shot at.”

“Maybe Jeb would be interested too.”

“I mentioned it to Abel and Royce and they said that they were going to look into it. If we could get 2 of us working on 2nd shift and 2 on 3rd shift, it would cut the fuel usage. And since Gene is a reserve Deputy, the Sheriff wants him working one day a week.”

◦

WANTED

NEW/USED QUART/PINT MASON JARS
50¢ Pre-1965 silver/dozen

◦

“It would only be 2 nights a week, Becky. I think Jeb is going to do it too. With the way things are now, it couldn’t hurt to be a reserve peace officer and get some training. I’ll be done buying firearms soon and I need to replace the silver I used up doing that.”

“If you put on a uniform, you’ll be painting a bullseye on your back. Aren’t we earning enough money with the bread sales?”

“We have to reimburse Gene for the supplies so he can replace them. Then the money is divided 7 ways. This would double that income and make it possible for us to buy manufactured goods and fuel when they become available. The RPD is supplying N-100 facemasks and level Ila vests. We need the income honey.”

“If you hadn’t bought those stupid cowboy guns, you wouldn’t need to replace the silver.”

“Maybe, maybe not. I consider them an investment. Considering how cheaply I’ve been buying them in a year or two, I could triple my money.”

“Money won’t bring you back if you get shot and killed. I don’t want to be a widow and have two orphaned children.”

“That could just as easily happen here on the farm. The upside, if there is one, is that I’ll have extra training and the vest in addition to the income.”

“You’re not to give in this time, are you?”

“Not this time, no. I said earlier that this isn’t over. We may not have another war or any natural disasters, but based on what the National Weather Service is forecasting, we may be lucky to get enough food for ourselves from 3½ acres. Plus we’re going to need to buy canning jars and lids. The lids are probably going to be hard to come by and expensive.”

“Just be careful.”

“I’ll be very careful, Becky.”

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“While we prefer our reserve officers to have a POST certificate and law enforcement experience, we are considering all applicants at the moment. You will be partnered with an experienced officer. RPD will provide your vest and badge and you will be responsible for providing your own duty equipment including uniform, gear and weapon. Officers are required to carry a 9mm, .40S&W or .45ACP and to qualify with the weapon they choose to carry. Each vehicle is equipped with an AR-15 rifle and a 12-gauge shotgun and you must qualify with both weapons as well. Any questions? Come forward when your name is called.”

“James Young, step forward.”

“Mr. Young what prompted you to apply as a reserve officer?”

“I have a family to feed and my boss is an active Reserve Deputy Sheriff.”

“You haven’t indicated any law enforcement experience on your application.”

“Correct. The only experience I have was in the Army during Iraqi Freedom.”

“I see that you’re married. How does your wife feel about you being a reserve officer?”

“Less than ecstatic. She’s a nurse and has seen her share of gunshot victims.”

“Do you have any questions?”

“No.”

“You’ll be notified as soon as we complete your background check.”

“Thank you.”

◦

“How the hell are they going to run a background check, Gene? The FBI computers were destroyed when they nuked Washington.”

“I’d imagine they’d check your service record and the Nevada computers. You have a CCW, right?”

“Yes.”

“They’ll probably reference that file, too. It may not be perfect, but you have a clean record so there shouldn’t be any difficulty.”

“What about Jeb?”

“They’ll check with Oklahoma City and he’ll probably get hired too.”

“Any words of wisdom?”

“Hey, let’s be careful out there.”

◦

“Abel and I have the 2nd shift and Jeb and Royce the 3rd shift. The maximum number of hours we’re allowed to work is 17. So, you see I’ll be home every night.”

“You got accepted?”

“Yes, I was notified today. The 4 of us are going into Reno to pick up our duty gear and uniforms. Then, we’ll stop by the station and be sworn in.”

“When do you start?”

“Tomorrow night sweetheart.”

“What are you going to use for a duty weapon?”

“One of the Gold Cup Trophy’s.”

“I’ll not say anything more about it, but I want you to stop this as soon as you’ve recovered the money you spent on those cowboy guns.”

“That’s going to take 3-4 years.”

“How many guns did you buy?”

“30 rifles and 30 revolvers”

“Corner the market?”

“Hardly. I turned down more than I bought. A couple of the weapons showed up on the list Gene got me. That’s how I got hooked up with the RPD. And some people wanted 3 arms and a leg for their guns. It was a buyers’ market, with the food and fuel shortage and paper money not being worth much.”

“Then how can you say that buying them was an investment?”

“I told you before, Becky, this thing isn’t over. Right now people are thinking with their stomachs and all of those Californians expect the Reno, Washoe County and Nevada to protect them. I think that bubble is going to burst one of these days and they’ll realize that they really need to be able to protect themselves.”

o

“Your dad said that we’re putting in 3½ acres. What’s our priority?”

“Potatoes, squash, corn, green beans, peppers, carrots, onions and tomatoes. We can also try lettuce and other salad ingredients. We might try some chili plants but I’m not sure if we should try and grow dry beans and I think that rice is out of the question. We can buy bulk wheat from an elevator and make our own whole-wheat flour.”

“I started 90 tomato plants, 30 pepper plans and 3 varieties of chilies. We should be able to measure our potato harvest in tons. I’m dickering with a man in Reno for a commercial oven setup that would allow us to increase our bread production and reduce the amount of propane we’re using. If I can get my hands on one of those large commercial mixers, the ladies should be able to turn out close to 400 loaves a day. You’re still selling out in the first hour, right?”

“Right. Where would you put an oven? We used the shed for a chicken coup and we can’t bake bread in the barn.”

“I’ve lined up one of those portable classrooms. The ovens are quadruple convection ovens and there are 6 of them available. 24 ovens and 8 pans per oven mean 192 loaves at a time.”

o

“Curfew violation. We’d better check them out and see if we need to get them home or detain them. You cover me and observe. Take the shotgun.”

“Yes sir.”

“Police. Stop.”

Jim was uneasy doing this again. His partner, a training officer, Lance James, approached the 4 men carefully making sure not to get between Jim and the men. Lance had even released the safety strap on his service pistol before approaching the men. People had gotten used to martial law and were now testing the limits, still trying to get wherever they were going after dusk. Two earlier stops that evening had resulted in people being delivered home and strongly cautioned. This wasn’t the same; these men appeared to be about Jim’s age and weren’t slow moving seniors.

“Spread eagle on the ground, arms out.”

Three of the men complied, but the 4th hesitated before assuming the position. When Lance searched them, he came up with a handgun from the man who had hesitated.

“Call for transport. We’ll let them sort this out at the County jail.”

“Baker 7 requires transport for 4 prisoners at Ryland and Wells.”

“10-4 Baker 7, 10 minutes.”

“10-4.”

“Why are you hassling us?”

“Curfew violation. Do you have a permit to carry a concealed weapon?”

The speaker rolled over on his back, apparently to speak to Lance. He came up with a derringer and Jim shot him, just like that.

“Dispatch, officers need assistance, Ryland and Wells, shots fired.”

“Nice shooting partner, you’ll do. Now you get to learn about paperwork and shooting teams. You did just like you were instructed, center mass.”

“Is he dead?”

“I sure hope so. I don’t know how I missed that derringer. This is the 5th shooting this month but the first where we got the bad guy and not the other way around. Give me your cuffs. The three of you are under arrest. The charge is attempted murder.” (You do remember the felony murder rule, right? A curfew violation was a felony. Officers were permitted limited discretion where the violators were obviously late, cooperative and just trying to get home.)

◦

“How did it go tonight?”

“Badly.”

“What happened?”

“I had to shoot a man.”

“First night on the job? I knew it. I can see the headlines, *Probationary Reserve Officer Shoots Man 3 Hours after Beginning New Job.*”

“You knew what, Becky? It was our third curfew violation of the night. Lance missed a derringer and the guy tried to shoot him. I didn’t really have much choice.”

“Let it go, Jim. She needs to have her cry. This isn’t like before where an officer might go for years without needing to draw his weapon. Shooting team cleared you right?”

“It doesn’t make me feel much better.”

“As much as I hate to say it, this is something that you’d better get used to. Some of those other shootings didn’t turn out as well because the new reserve officer hesitated.”

“Still...”

“Right, you’d prefer it to say, *Probationary Reserve Officer Shot by Man 3 Hours after Beginning New Job.*”

◦

“Three hours after you’re on the street you shot a man? 3 frigin’ hours? I can’t believe it. What do you have to say for yourself, Officer Young?”

“Captain, I did what I had to do.”

“Right and you wasted some punk with a gun, right?”

“Yes sir.”

“Good, I think you may finish probation early. I wish we had more men like you. You’re being nominated for the Medal of Valor; you saved your partner’s life.”

“I didn’t do it to get a medal.”

“Exactly, that’s why you’re getting it. That will be all. Congratulations officer.”

“He doesn’t understand.”

“He understands perfectly, it’s you who doesn’t understand. That’s what being a partner is about. We’re human and make mistakes. Stick around long enough and you’ll do it too. Our partner covers our back and corrects those lapses in judgment. You’re not going to have any problem with people wanting to partner with you. They know they can trust you to be there when they screw up.”

“I don’t know if I want that reputation or the responsibility. I’m just a farm boy that did a tour for his country and worked for a wholesale grocer until everything went to hell in a handcart.”

“Jim boy, it’s a whole different world now. As bad as it was before, it’s worse – limited food, no fuel and no natural gas. We haven’t seen the last of it by a long shot. Do you raise livestock on your farm?”

“Cattle, hogs, chickens and horses.”

“People are hungry. You’d better make sure someone is guarding those animals or you’ll lose them for sure and get killed in the process.”

“We’re very well prepared in case anyone tries.”

“I damn well hope so. Let’s hit the streets.”

Jim and Lance escorted some seniors back to their retirement home but it was generally an uneventful night. It was one hell of a way to begin a part time career as a reserve police officer. Jim decided that he’d better see what he could do to arrange the POST training.

Jim and Becky – Chapter 6 – POST

From the Reno Gazette-Journal:

Police Officer Standard and Training Board: Reno Police Chief Jim Weston will welcome police officer recruits Monday morning as they begin 18 weeks of intensive police academy training at the Regional Public Safety Training Center.

The recruits, who academy officials say include 25 from the Reno Police Department and three from the Sparks Police Department will be trained in classroom and through practical exercises and scenario-based activities to meet a myriad of requirements set in Nevada Revised Statutes to be a Category I peace officer. Training at the Reno-Sparks Law Enforcement Academy will be conducted by a cadre of instructors from the Reno and Sparks Police Departments, the Washoe County Crime Lab, the Washoe County District Attorney's Office, Reno Fire Department and other agencies teaching courses in investigations such as investigating crime scenes, accidents, domestic abuse, child and elderly abuse; evidence preservation and collection; officer skills such as interviewing techniques, methods of arrest, defensive tactics, patrol procedures and operation of emergency vehicles; Constitutional law as well as laws of arrest, search and seizure, narcotics and traffic laws; defensive tactics and officer safety; as well as community relations subjects such as interpersonal communication, victim's rights and ethics in law enforcement, and cultural awareness.

The class will include Reserve Officer James Young, rural Reno, who last week received the Medal of Valor. On his first day on the job as a Reserve Officer, Young found himself faced with an officer's worst nightmare, an armed suspect who attempted to kill his partner with a concealed handgun. Young, who had been on the job for only 3 hours, was acting as backup for veteran training officer Lance James. Young, acting without hesitation, was credited with saving James's life. Young is married to the former Becky Baker of rural Reno and they have two newborn children, twins named James and Rebecca. In addition to his reserve officer duties, Young raises livestock. Mrs. Young was a registered nurse at St. Mary's Hospital in Reno.

"There, are you happy, I won't on the street for 18 weeks?"

"They're paying you aren't they?"

"In this instance yes, but only for 17 hours a week."

"We have it set up for Jeb to take the girls into the farmer's market every day."

"Did Gene buy the ovens? I see that that portable classroom has been set up."

"Gene has been a Godsend, expanding the bakery, plowing, disking, dragging and helping plant the garden. That hot house of his really worked out well and almost all of the plantings survived."

“Have the schools reopened? Some of these kids are missing out on their educations.”

“Not now silly, it’s summer. School will resume in September.”

“It doesn’t feel much like summer, I can’t remember a colder spring.”

“The National Weather Service confirmed what we heard on CNN and announced that this summer and possibly next will experience temperatures up to 5° Celsius below normal. Moisture this year will be average to above average with a harsh winter and a dry cold summer next year. The following winter will be dry and marginally warmer and the following summer is expected to be hot and dry.”

“I heard all of that on TV.”

“NOAA was speculating but this is fact. It is an abbreviated Nuclear Winter. They indicated that crop estimates for the coming two years would range from 20 to 30% below normal. Congress passed that bill that Bush wanted putting the US back on the Gold and Silver Standard. The price of gold will float with the world markets and the new dollar will be redeemable in gold or silver at the rate of one dollar per 1/20 ounce of silver.”

“I don’t know if that is good or bad.”

“NBC didn’t either. They had 4 expert commentators on and they got into an argument. Brian Williams ended up breaking for a commercial and they didn’t come back to them. They said that they’d be reissuing the currency and we’d be able to redeem our old pre-65 coins based on the new valuation. All of the new coins will be silver and have new values.”

“I’m more interested in how our babies are doing.”

“They’re gaining weight rapidly and I took them in and got them their first doctor’s exam. He started their immunizations. You dad went in too because of his stomach. He’s scheduled for a gastroscopy on Wednesday.”

“Probably an ulcer.”

“I really don’t know. If it were, the Prevacid should have relieved his problem. I also ran a course of Carafate 10 ml QID for 30 days and that should have healed any ulcers if he had them.”

“I’ve got to check in with Dad and Gene and play with the kids before I get some sleep.”

“Hey Dad, I understand that you went to the doctor. That’s unusual, you must really be sick.”

“My gut is driving me crazy. I never had gastritis this bad before. Nothing seems to help anymore.”

“I understand from Becky that Gene has done a lot of the gardening.”

“The man’s a natural born farmer. Didn’t need to tell him anything more than once. He plowed, disked and dragged the garden and then help plant it. Did you see the new bakery?”

“He mentioned it before he bought the building and equipment. I haven’t had a chance to see inside, I’ve been pretty busy.”

“He has 6 4-compartment ovens, a mixer, stainless steel tables and those bread racks plus all of the other stuff you need to bake and package bread. They’re cutting the loaves now, except for the squaw bread, and bagging it in plastic bags. He even found a commercial wheat mill so they can grind new flour while the bread is baking. They have been pulling out what we need here and selling the rest. Sold out every day.”

“Good. I just wanted to check in on you and need to visit with Gene before I go play with the kids. I’ll check with you Wednesday night when I get home. Bye.”

“Are you going to give me a tour of your new bread factory?”

“Sure. It’s quite the operation. I bought 10 tons of wheat and have it stored so we don’t run out of material. It takes about 600 pounds of flour a day now.”

“Dad told me that you bought a wheat mill.”

“Bought a used 24” Meadows Stone Burr Mill, Jim. It takes them an hour or so to grind enough wheat for the next day.”

“Did my first day in POST training today.”

“That good, but don’t let them ruin you.”

“What do you mean?”

“That shooting on your first day of work was right by the book. Don’t know that I’d have done as well myself. Don’t let them persuade you that you have to hesitate if that situation ever comes up again. Hesitating will get you or your partner killed. That was a righteous shooting and if it hadn’t have been, you’d have heard about it. Instead they hung a medal on you for doing the right thing at the right time. That’s probably from your military training and doing a tour in Iraq.”

“Tell me about the garden.”

“Man, I’ll tell you, when the crops come in, the ladies are going to busier than bees. We have 88 tomato plants, 28 pepper plants, an acre of potatoes, a lot of onions and everything seems to be coming up.”

“Did you decide to plant beans?”

“I plowed an extra half acre and planted it in pinto beans and navy beans. Hooked us up with a California rice grower. I’ll buy it in 100# bags and maybe we can repackage it and sell it at the farmer’s market. Managed to locate one of my coffee suppliers too. It’s first-rate coffee in his opinion, second or third in mine, but he can sell us roasted beans. Got a used supermarket coffee mill, too. We’re going to be in good shape on food. The only thing was I had to drive to both places because they can’t seem to get the damned long distance phone service restored.”

“Have we gotten enough mason jars?”

“We’ve been steaming those spaghetti sauce labels off for a month. We have 2,000 quarts, 600 pints and 5,000 lids. I know a few low people in high places. Now that the Sheriff’s Department and the RPD are back in place the National Guard boys have been running vehicle patrols. We’ll probably get attacked about 2 days after they stop them.”

“I’ve got to get home and play with my kids for a minute and hit the sack, it’s going to be a long day tomorrow.”

“Yeah, see ya, Jim.”

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Wednesday evening when Jim got home, Becky told him that his Dad wanted to see him, that he had the results from the exam.

“Hi, Dad how are you feeling?”

“Sit down, Jim, I’ve got something to tell you.”

“What’s up?”

“I had that exam today and the doctor took a biopsy. It will be a couple of days before the pathologist confirms it but I’ve got a late gastric adenocarcinoma. It’s cancer. He told me that often they’re not discovered in time to do surgery and mine is long gone. Said he could treat the symptoms and make me comfortable, but that radiation or chemo probably wouldn’t do much good. Said the gastritis was probably responsible and then when I got the cancer, the gastritis masked the symptoms.”

“Did he have a prognosis?”

“Yeah, I’m going to die, but he didn’t say how long it would be. Anyway, here’s the deal, I’m leaving the farm to you and your brother on the condition that your mother always has a home and everything she needs. You can work something out with Jeb if he decides to return to Kansas. I’ll leave the money to your mother and she’ll see that it’s equitably divided when she goes. Other than that, it’s Maalox, maybe painkiller later on, and I plan to live until I die. I didn’t tell Becky or Jeb yet, so you don’t say anything to him until I have a chance to talk with him.”

“Sure. Nothing I can do?”

“Yeah, you can graduate that school you’re going to and make me proud.”

“I’ll check with you tomorrow night.”

o

“What did you dad say?”

“He has a late gastric adenocarcinoma.”

“Inoperable?”

“Yes.”

“Has it metastasized?”

“He didn’t say. All he said was that surgery was out, and chemo and radiation wouldn’t help much. He didn’t have any idea how long he has.”

“Do you want to know?”

“Yes, very much.”

“My best guess would be 6 months or less. I’ll go with him to the doctor and we’ll work out something for pain management.”

“He’s only 56 years old, Becky.”

“Even if it was caught in an early stage, the 5 year survival rate is low, Jim. I’m so sorry, but I’ll do what I can to help him.”

“Make him comfortable you mean.”

“Exactly. We can treat him here if he chooses not to be hospitalized. That would be preferable to having him pass away in a hospital surround by strangers. It will primarily

consist of pain management and perhaps things needed to stabilize him. Once the cancer metastasizes, it will spread rapidly and begin to involve numerous organs.”

“I want to spend time with him. I’m going to withdraw from POST training so I can. I’ll talk to Chief Weston and explain what’s going on. The training isn’t mandatory for a reserve officer so it won’t affect my work.”

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“... And under the circumstances sir, I’d like permission to withdraw.”

“Granted. Perhaps you can enroll in a later class. I’ll have someone notify the Regional Training Center. Check with your Watch Commander tomorrow to get a new schedule. I’m sorry about your father, did you say 56?”

“Yes Sir.”

“Damned shame. Thanks for coming in Officer Young.”

“... So I’ll be taking the training later, Dad. The Chief was very understanding. I hope you’re understanding too.”

“It doesn’t matter to me, one way or another. I’ve heard both good and bad about the POST training. My only concern was that you not wimp out halfway through. Gene said something about it and I don’t really think you need it. If it’s optional, don’t bother unless you intend to become a full time police officer. Becky is going with me to the doctor tomorrow. She’s going to be managing my medication. You know that old California black oak tree towards the rear of the property?”

“Yes what about it?”

“I think that would be a good place to take a rest.”

“Sure dad. We’ll take care of it, when the time comes.”

◦

“Hey big brother, talk to dad?”

“Damn it, stomach cancer?”

“Late stomach cancer. I talked to Becky and he probably has less than 6 months. I pulled out of that training program so I could spend more time with him.”

“Have you looked at the size of the garden Gene and the others put in? It’s huge.”

“Four acres, Jeb, Gene put in a half acre of pinto and navy beans. He made a trip to California and hooked up with people to supply us rice and coffee.”

“That man seems to spend money like he owns the bank.”

“He made a killing on the dotcom thing and bought gold and silver cheap. As far as him getting us food, he was a wholesaler for years. I’d imagine he has a fat Rolodex.”

“Listen when this is all over, Mandy, David and I are going back to Kansas. Get the land appraised and send me payments until you have my 40 acres paid for.”

“They’ll have to do that as part of the estate settlement, Jeb. The estate may have to pay federal inheritance taxes. They don’t have much in the bank; he converted it to gold, so there might not even be those to pay. He told me this morning that that old black oak tree towards the rear of the farm was where...”

“Yeah, he told me. He also told me to just build him a plain pine box and not waste any money on the usual stuff.”

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“The doctor said that your dad ~4 months. They did a CT scan while we were there and said that it’s metastasized. I have your dad’s medicine; the doctor put him on morphine and Maalox. He said we’d probably need the morphine next month. He said to start him on a dosage of 0.1 mg/kg subcutaneous and adjust.”

“I’ll be on 3rd shift starting tomorrow night. They gave me to a new training officer because Lance already has a new reserve officer. Seems like a nice enough guy, John Hedges.”

“Good, is he as serious as Lance?”

“A little more politically correct. Lance said to keep an eye on the guy and watch my own back.”

“Good advice, take it. Oh, I picked up an oxygen machine for later. It’s adjustable to 10 liters. It will make a good addition to our medical equipment in the shelter, after. The doctor said that during the last stage of your father’s illness we might consider epidural administration of the morphine. We’ll also pick up some IV sets and some IV solutions.”

“Are we going to end up with a full blown medical clinic?”

“Hardly. I may be a trauma nurse, but that’s a long way from being a physician. Did Jeb tell you Mandy was expecting again?”

“No. When?”

“Eight months. She may manage to have 2 in diapers just like we do.”

“That will please Dad, does he know?”

“Yes, Jeb told him.”

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“Their birthdays will be about a month apart, Jim. It would be nice if we got a daughter this time, but as long as the baby’s healthy, it doesn’t really matter. Mandy radioed her mom so they know. If they can get enough gasoline, they may come out to see David and visit. They’re going to need a travel permit. I don’t think much of some of these new rules the government is using these days, it’s worse than Russia.”

“I agree, but it’s only temporary until more fuel is available. As I understand it, the sole purpose of the permit is to verify that you have the fuel to make the trip both ways and they can verify that the route you’re using is safe. There has been some trouble on some of the interstates.”

“I heard in the watch briefing. That damned Toyota hybrid Mandy’s dad Jim bought almost makes gas. He gets 60mpg city and 70 on the highway.”

“What route will they take?”

“Normally, they go through Denver to Cheyenne and pick up I-80. Since Cheyenne got hit, I figure they’ll pick up I-70 to Beaver and come cross-country from there, most of the trip on US 50. Jim will probably bring his own fuel and drive through non-stop since he’ll have a travel permit.”

o

The government of the US was doing everything in its power to get things in the country back to normal. Although how normal it would be remained to be seen. Food was available on a per-capita basis of ~1,500 calories per person. Fuel remained the main obstacle to things getting all the way back. Middle Eastern countries were demanding more than \$100 per barrel for their oil, a price that the President refused to pay. He had steamrolled a measure through Congress to allow development of the 500 million barrels of oil off the California coast in the area of Santa Barbara and to open the second oil field in Alaska. In an effort to force more people to switch to the fuel-efficient hybrid cars, Congress had tacked on an amendment that provided tax credits for hybrid vehicles and limited fuel available to the so-called gas-guzzlers. People with inefficient vehicles could only get travel permits under extra-ordinary circumstances. Mass transit and especially the railroads were enjoying vastly improved circumstances and no travel permit was required.

Although the US hadn't adopted a National ID card, they'd done the second best thing, establishing uniform standards for state driver's licenses and requiring the state licenses or corresponding state ID Cards to use Smart Card technology. The US Supreme Court had rejected the ACLU's case on the same day as it rejected the case by the environmentalists. The third case rejected by the court that day was the action brought to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. The Justices did, however, take the case challenging federal limitations on embryonic stem cell research. Conservative Republicans, and especially President Bush, were shocked by some of the rulings. The deciding vote in all of the cases was that of Justice Gonzales.

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New Mexico State Defense Force continues to guard the state's southern borders. Begun in 2005 in response to heightened illegal border crossings and rampant drug trafficking, the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas raised a force of 36,000 to guard the border when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declined to assign the same number of National Guardsman for the same purpose. The Texas and California actions were discontinued after the Chinese attack; however Arizona and New Mexico continued their activities.

Government officials announced today that new coinage would begin to become available as soon as two months in the future. The new dollar coin, slightly larger than a dime, is being stockpiled for the planned currency exchange. The new coins will be the dollar, the half dollar, the quarter and the dime. The penny and nickel will be eliminated.

Agreement was reached with the Canadian government today to resume the supply of natural gas to the United States. An ongoing effort to produce home heating oil for this coming winter has resulted in the President releasing the strategic petroleum reserve for that purpose.

◦

"I don't know what Lance James taught you, but we'll be doing things a little differently on my watch. I will not condone anymore of your cowboy antics. In normal times, you'd been standing tall before a Shooting Review Board explaining your cavalier attitude about discharging your firearm. Do you understand?"

"No, I don't understand John. What is the point of my backing you up if I'm unwilling to do what the situation calls for? However, if that's what you want, I can wait until the guy shoots you and then shoot him, it's all the same to me."

"How is it going with your new TO?"

"I thinking of resigning."

"Why?"

“He’s dangerous. We stopped two elderly couples last night and he didn’t even ask for ID, he just loaded them in the back of the car and gave them a ride. Where is it written that all of the bad guys are in their teens or twenties and black or Hispanic? You always insisted that we ID the people and question them before you made the decision to give them a ride or arrest them. He also lectured me on use of a firearm in a backup situation.”

“I had to cut that trainee loose, do you want to come back to 2nd shift and work with me?”

“Please.”

“I’ll arrange it. Second shift Tuesday night.”

“Thanks Lance.”

o

“Not bad, 50 pigs, we’ll butcher the barrows and breed the gilts.”

“Do you want to explain all of the livestock terms to me, please?”

“Sure Gene, a boar is an adult male, a sow an adult female, a piglet or farrow a juvenile, a shoat a young pig between 100 to 180 lb, a gilt is an immature female and a barrow a castrated male. Young cattle are called calves. A young male is called a bull-calf; a young female before she has calfed is called a heifer. Male cattle bred for meat are castrated unless needed for breeding. The castrated male is then called a bullock or steer. If castrated as an adult, it is called a stag. An intact male is called a bull. As for the horses, a colt is a male horse to age 4, a filly a female until age 3, a gelding a castrated male horse of any age, a mare is an adult female and a stallion an adult male. The definitions vary in racing, but only as to age, it being 5. If you hear the term hand used, that’s 4”. Male chickens are known as roosters, cockerels, or cocks and female chickens are hens. A castrated cock is called a capon and a young hen a pullet. All of the chickens we have are the Leghorn breed, the hogs Yorks and the cattle are Angus. The horses are a mixed breed commonly called a western saddle horse although there is one Arabian stallion.”

“There are 32 male pigs, are they our meat stock?”

“Right, we’ll butcher 11 for our own consumption and sell the other 21 this year. In subsequent years, we’ll have more pork than we know what to do with and will probably sell all but 11, 10 if Jeb and Mandy go back to Kansas. The average person eats 60 pounds of beef, 50 pounds of pork, 60 pounds of chicken, 15 pounds of turkey and 15 pounds of fish a year. We don’t have fish or turkey so we’ll probably substitute chicken. It will only take 5 sides of beef to supply our beef needs and we can sell the other 3 sides to the

government for food stocks. By the way, I had to change partners, that new training officer, John Hedges, is an accident looking for a place to happen. I'll be back with Lance next week."

"How is your Dad doing?"

"Becky said the doctor gave him ~4 months. She picked up his medications, an oxygen machine and said something about getting some IV sets. That will improve the little clinic in the shelter considerably."

"Would you mind if I put in some storage bins to store grain?"

"No, can you get it cheaper in bulk?"

"A lot cheaper if I buy it by the truckload. I'd like to have enough wheat on hand to keep the bread operation going for several months in case we have more weather problems or something else happens. By the way, I contracted for brown rice, not white. It's more nutritious and far cheaper. I hope you don't mind."

"Not at all. Why don't you put in two grain bins and we'll store rice in the second?"

"I'll put in 4 or 5 and we'll store corn in the 3rd, oats in the 4th and barley in the 5th. I mean what the hell; it just makes sense to store as much grain as we can. You're going to need grain for livestock feed, right?"

"Yeah, but not that much, not right away anyway."

"That milling machine will produce cornmeal and Scottish oatmeal. American oatmeal is rolled oats. Maybe we can add that to our farmer's market fare."

"It looks to me like you're slowing getting back into business."

"I guess that I am, but this is more fun than the way I used to do business. That was positively cutthroat and a penny made a lot of difference. Now, I'm producing the food and eliminating a middleman. I like it a whole lot better."

"Is the Guard maintaining their patrols?"

"They've cut them by half in preparation for eliminating them all together. I think it's a little early to do that, it hasn't even been a year and we're far from being back to normal. However with the restoration of natural gas and electricity, I can understand their thinking. I'd imagine that martial law wouldn't be around for too much longer. The Sheriff said that the goal was to have it eliminated by July 4th."

o

“Jim, I heard that your Dad had stomach cancer, sorry.”

“Thanks Lance. He’s being well cared for. Gene said that the Sheriff told them that the goal is to eliminate martial law by July 4th.”

“I heard, but it’s too early. I had a word with John Hedges and he agreed to transfer you back to me. That man is going to get someone killed with all of his PC nonsense. They’re going to put him in a single officer patrol car; you’re the 8th man who has bailed on him. He was ok until a Shooting Review Board raked him over the coals. I guess he got gun shy.”

“Being gun shy is going to get him killed the way the streets are these days. Like I told you, I’d have done what he said, but when he wouldn’t check IDs before putting people in the back of the car, I had to get away from him.”

“How is that farmer’s market thing of yours working out? The wife bought some bread and it was really good.”

“Which kind did she buy?”

“Whole wheat squaw bread.”

“That’s my mother’s recipe, adapted to whole wheat flour of course. We’re putting out almost 2,000 loaves of bread a week. We grind our own flour out of wheat. The wheat is good for bread but not pasta.”

“What kind of wheat do you need to make pasta?”

“The kinds of wheat used in the United States are: durum, a very hard, translucent, light colored grain used to make semolina flour for pasta; hard red spring and winter, a hard, brownish, high protein wheat used for bread and hard baked goods; soft red winter a soft, brownish, medium protein wheat used for bread; and, hard and soft white, a light colored, opaque, chalky, medium protein wheat planted in dry, temperate areas that is used for bread and brewing.”

“What do you buy?”

“Red and white, depending upon what is available, preferably hard red. I expect Gene will put durum in the 5th grain bin and start making pasta too. After that he’ll probably buy a rolling mill to make rolled oats.”

“Quite the cottage industry.”

“More of a portable classroom industry, but yes, it’s really grown. If he adds much more, we’ll need a second classroom.”

“Someone said you had a fancy shelter.”

“Not fancy, but fairly large. Made it out of used 12’ culvert. Why don’t you come out to the farm and I’ll give you a tour.”

“I really should put in a shelter.”

“You might want to talk to Gene, Lance. His house is empty and he has a shelter made out of 2 reinforced 40’ containers. I don’t know if he would be interested in selling it, but you could ask. All it would take to finish the place off, if you bought it, would be to replace the generator and add a fuel tank.”

o

“The house is sitting empty, Lance. We drained the pipes and added antifreeze to the drains. I hadn’t thought about selling it, I have to talk to Marilyn about that. I pulled the generator so you’d have to replace it and the propane tank. Understand my shelter is less than half as large as Jim’s.”

“How big is a 40’ container, inside?”

“Each container is 12.03 meters long, 2.35 meters wide and 2.39 meters high on the inside and 12.19 meters long, 2.43 meters wide and 2.59 meters high on the outside. The volume is a shade over 67.5 m³, about 2,386 ft³ or 304 ft². They were very cramped for 17 people, only 35 ft² apiece. I originally only intended the shelter for 5 people, which would have given us 122 ft² apiece.”

“Lance, our shelter was basically set up as 4 wings, one for each family. Each has a bathroom and the kitchen and dining room are set up in the wing that connects to the basement of the house. There is a 15kw diesel generator and 1,500-gallons of diesel fuel to run it. We’ve been making changes and additions, keeping up with how many people there are. Becky bought some additional durable medical equipment that will be moved to the shelter later.”

“If Gene doesn’t want to sell his house, maybe I’ll talk to you about moving here. Do you think that would be possible?”

“My brother and his wife will be leaving later on and there will be an empty trailer. I don’t see why not. Gene owns those 5 trailers but he doesn’t charge rent. All of the wives work in the bakery and share equally in the proceeds from the sale of the bread.”

“What’s your situation as far as weapons goes?”

“We have some MBR’s, AR’s, and handguns. There are some other things available too, in a pinch. What do you have?”

“An Austrian FAL rifle, a MP-5N, my service pistol and backup, plus a M1911, a Ruger Mark II, a Ruger 10/22 and a Remington Express 12-gauge combo.”

“Except for my M1A, all of our MBR’s are Austrian FALs, too. I switched to carrying one of those after we had some trouble and ran out of ammo. After people started coming back, I set up a table and bought quite a few .45 Colt caliber rifles and revolvers. You know, when Jeb leaves, I may just send my M1A with him so we can standardize our weapons. It wasn’t too bright my carrying a M1A when everyone else had metric FALs.”

“Are you in good shape on ammo?”

“You don’t know?”

“Know what? Why are you smirking?”

“We store it in the barn at the moment, come look.”

“You’ve been holding out on me unless you’re planning of taking those 7.62x51mm cartridges out of the belts.”

“We won’t do that, we had to go to Hawthorne and get that ammo.”

“They said they were missing a bunch of 7.62x51mm machine gun ammo.”

“How would they know, they had so much?”

“Some of those Army types are a little anal retentive when it comes to accounting for ammo. So what do you have for machine guns?”

“Four M-60E4s/Mk 43s and Gene has 4 M-79 smoke and flare launchers. Gene has a younger brother who is in the Marines, a Staff Sergeant or something.”

“Gunnery Sergeant. And he did work in supply for a while.”

“Don’t tell me you have...”

“I won’t tell you that, Lance.”

“Where do you park the LAV-25s?”

“Don’t have any, not that we would mind having a couple.”

“I don’t know where you can get any either. Ask your Dad if he remembers the M706/V-100 armored car that they used in the Vietnam War. Those are available for foreign military sales and for Law Enforcement use without the machine gun. They use a 215 hp, 361 cu inch Chrysler V8 engine but most police agencies that buy them upgrade them

to a Cummins diesel engine and strengthen the drive train. They were designed for convoy escort, reconnaissance, or police riot control and most of the vehicles purchased by police departments are used for riot control. Since Gene is Sheriff's Department and I'm RPD, we might be able to get either the Sheriff or Chief Weston to let us buy one, sans machine guns. Get Gene to talk to the Sheriff and I'll put in a feeler at the Department."

"What would it take to get one upgraded and ready to use?"

"A new engine and an improved rear axle system. They had a problem busting the rear axles."

o

"Yeah I remember them. Used them in and around Saigon. The Air Force version was equipped with a M2HB machine gun. Had about 1/4" of armor. I figured they junked them; that was 35-40 years ago."

"Apparently they're available for police department and foreign military sales. However, Lance suggested that we could get one without the machine guns, replace the engine with a Cummins diesel and do something to improve the rear axle."

"Did Gene decide to sell him their home?"

"Apparently not. Lance and his family may move out here later. Gene said something about using his shelters to store additional supplies."

"Maybe Gene could get you a M2HB Enhanced machine gun. In July of 2004, the military contracted for a lot of about 1,150 new M2HB machine guns. They were supposed to be upgraded with quick change, Stellite®-Lined, Chrome-Plated barrels. The price was within \$1,000 of that of the original machine gun. General Dynamics got the contract."

"I could ask, but we really wouldn't need one unless we got the V-100 armored car."

"Have you talked to him about those, yet?"

"Not yet, I was giving Lance a tour of the facilities."

"On your way out, tell Becky that I need to see her."

o

"Yeah, I heard of them. If you can find a decent one, that has an intact body, you still have to replace the engine. Then, you'd have to find a Ma Deuce and a M240 to arm it."

“Lance mentioned the vehicle, called it an armored car. He said they were available to police departments.”

“We could just rebuild that gasoline engine, you know. But the parts might be difficult to come by. On the other hand I do know where we can get the Cummins engines.”

“What about the automatic weapons?”

“I saw a new, still in the box, M240 for sale on the Internet before. The guy wanted \$175 thousand for it.”

“Greedy, huh?”

“Yeah, the government only pays about \$6,600 bucks for one.”

“What do you think? LAV-25s would be nice but they’re out of the question. These armored cars might be a good alternative.”

“Is Lance going to talk to Chief Weston?”

“Yep.”

“Then I’ll talk to the Sheriff. Don’t get your hopes up. If we can both get one, then what?”

“Swap the engines, add the machine guns, upgrade the rear axles and park them in the barn until we need them, I suppose.”

“I could wire my brother and explain what we’re doing. No promises on that either.”

o

“What did Dad need?”

“A shot.”

“Morphine?”

“Yes. I started him on 0.1 mg/kg. His weight is 166 pounds so I gave him 7.5mg. I checked his bp and it was elevated so there’s no doubt he’s in pain. The doctor said not to worry about respiratory depression and to go up to 0.2mg/kg PRN in 0.025mg/kg increments.”

“What’s the respiratory depression thing?”

“Physicians are reluctant to adequately medicate on morphine because it depresses the respiratory system.”

“You can keep him comfortable?”

“For now. And later the doctor may choose to go to an epidural. The typical limit is 6 days for an epidural, but I’ve seen terminal patients on them a whole lot longer. I can go the IV route too and give him a bolus, but I’d rather wait on that.”

“I thought that morphine was administered IM.”

“Not for cancer patients.”

“This was sooner than I thought it might be.”

“There nothing exact with cancer, honey. That is why the doctor prescribed the meds.”

“What’s that ring binder you’re writing in?”

“It’s a patient chart.”

“Why are you keeping a chart on Dad?”

“I’m a nurse, Jim and nurses chart all of their patients. In your Dad’s case, it’s especially important that I keep a chart.”

“I don’t understand, why?”

“Because of the medications. Morphine is a dangerous drug and I’m related to your father. I’ve arranged for Heather, Claudia and Jeanne to take over his care during the last week so he’ll have care from disinterested persons. I, in turn, will cover their hospital shifts later. There’s a reason that medical professionals don’t generally treat their own relatives in critical situations, not the least of which is their judgment can be clouded by their emotions. The doctor will review the chart and initial the entries when he comes to check on your Dad.”

It made sense, but seemed like an unnecessary thing for Becky to do. With the nursery in the living room, the teenage girls took turns watching the babies, allowing Mandy and Becky to work in the bakery. With John needing more care, Glenda wasn’t herself and Becky need to be available to care for the two of them. This forced a role reversal with two of the girls working in the bakery instead and Glenda and Becky staying in the house. With all of the commercial equipment Gene had bought the bakery was no longer a grueling labor-intensive operation. They mixed batches of dough in the mixer, divide it into 4-loaf chunks, and set it aside to rise. This left them free for other things, house cleaning, enjoying a cup of coffee and maybe checking on the garden. When the dough had risen, it was punched down, kneaded, divided and panned and allow to rise a second time. To an outsider, the process would probably seem confusing with 100

stainless bowls holding rising dough. They had a cadence and a rhythm to their bread making and by now, the entire process flowed smoothly.

◦

In order to deal with the forthcoming canning process, Gene picked up two used gas stoves from another defunct restaurant and brought in a second used classroom. Abel and Royce assembled the sections and slapped on a coat of white enamel paint. Then, the burr mill was moved and a used roller mill added. To alleviate the amount of labor required in making bread he also bought a used kneading machine, setting it where the grinder had sat. The stoves were converted to propane and set up in the second classroom with the mills. Three people could process the bread and 3 could grind and bag the ground or rolled grain. When the canning season began the same 3 could do the canning with the others pitching in, as needed.

The transportation charges on the grain were very high and had not Gene offered to re-fill some of the trucks and tractors, they would have been astronomical. Gene was back in his own element now, wheeling and dealing. When they began offering ground and rolled grain for sale, they had to use a second delivery truck. Everything was sold in the same size bag, bagged and weighed by the teens. They were selling whole-wheat flour, corn meal, ground and rolled oats and brown rice. Weekly, Gene went by the Guard's cashier's office and turned in the rolls of rolled 90% silver coins and brought back 1 ounce gold Eagles.

On July 3rd, President Bush announced the suspension of martial law, effective midnight. Second shift was from 3 to 11 and Jim and Lance missed the trouble that followed. John Hedges could only wish that he had; at 2:45am he stopped a group of teenagers to see why they were out so late that night. At least that's what his log sheet said, John couldn't tell, a shotgun blast had cut him nearly in half. John joined the long list of officers that were so politically correct they were dead.

◦

"Why are you surprised, Jim? You saw the way the guy operated. He should have waited for the backup unit to arrive. John thought he could talk his way out of anything. This was just another case of when, not if."

"I know Lance but I worked with the guy, if only for a single watch."

"Don't dwell on it. You can't change what happened and if you don't put it out of your mind, it could affect your behavior. How is your Dad doing?"

"He's been on morphine for a couple of weeks now. He's started to lose weight and doesn't look good at all. Becky talked about putting him on an IV for nourishment. But he's tolerating the homemade baby foods so she's holding off."

“How’s your brother doing?”

“He’s angry; it’s how he’s dealing with this.”

“And the schoolhouse industry?”

“Five bins of grain, two of them hard white wheat. Gene, Abel and Royce installed a second classroom building and rehabbed it. It’s being used for the milling, bagging and canning operation. You give Gene a few months and he’ll have a 6th bin for durum wheat and start producing pasta. I thought you and your family would be by for the picnic.”

“We were packing, cleaning and getting the house ready to show.”

“Do you think it will sell?”

“I hope so. As long as Janet and I can get our equity out, it doesn’t matter. But if it doesn’t we’ll do what Gene did with his. He should be able to sell that house of his, lots of people from California looking for homes.”

“They’re putting in a root cellar now to store the potatoes. And, it’s a big one... what do you make of those people?”

“Large group, call for two backup units. Our location is California Avenue and Arlington. We’ll follow them for now.”

“Dispatch, Baker 7 southbound on Arlington from California. Requesting 2 backup units, code 2.”

“Baker 7, 10-4. Standby for the Watch Commander.”

“Baker 7, state your status.”

“Baker 7 had a large group, between 20 and 30 southbound on Arlington crossing St. Lawrence.”

“10-4 Baker 7, make the stop at Taylor, 2 units in route, code 2.”

“10-4.”

“Dispatch Baker 7, officers need assistance, shots fired.”

“All units, all units, Baker 7 requests assistance on Arlington near Taylor. Shots fired. All units respond code 3.”

o

“How are you?”

“I’ll live, bullet graze.”

“Lance?”

“The same, bullet through his left shoulder, broke the clavicle. He’s in surgery but they said it wouldn’t take too long.”

“What happened?”

“We/I spotted a group on young men walking south on Arlington. Something just seemed wrong. We called for backup and before they could respond and we could make the stop, two of them, or more, opened up with AK-47s. Have you ever seen 2 fully grown men trying to get into the foot well of a Crown Vic? A slug went between my vest and my back, cutting a gouge, or so they tell me. Smarts like a bitch.”

“What happened to the group?”

“I don’t have any idea, ask someone from the Department.”

“Mrs. Young, I’m Doctor Johnson. I understand that you’re a trauma nurse?”

“That’s right.”

“Your husband has a severe laceration above the right scapula, approximately 115cm in length. We debrided and sutured. Here is a prescription for Tylenol 3 and an antibiotic. You can take him home now. Officer Young, your partner is out of surgery and is going to be ok. He’s going to be laid up for a while, about 2 months.”

“Thanks, doc. Ready to go Becky?”

“Two shootings in 3 months? I can’t take much more of this, Jim. While you’re healing up I want you to give some serious consideration to turning in that damned badge of yours. You’re going to end up leaving the 4 of us all alone.”

“Four of us?”

“I’m pregnant. But, what do you care?”

“That’s not fair, Becky.”

Jim and Becky – Chapter 7 – In-laws

“Did you drive straight through?”

“Yes. What happened to your arm?”

“Actually it’s my back, I have a bullet graze.”

“Trouble here on the farm?”

“No, Jim, I’m a reserve police officer and my partner and I got shot up a week or so back. I should be getting the stitches out soon.”

“You partner, killed or shot up?”

“Shattered his left shoulder. He will be a long time healing.”

“We heard on the radio coming across the country that there has been a lot of trouble since the President lifted the martial law. I also understand that your father is ill?”

“Stomach cancer. He’s about your age, Jim. If you start getting gastritis, get in to see a doctor and have him run some tests. Dad didn’t and now it doesn’t make much difference.”

“Did you get a lot of radiation from the war?”

“Enough so we stayed sheltered for the better part of 100 days. It was fallout from San Francisco. What is the weather like back in Kansas?”

“Worst growing season in a number of years, the farmers are all complaining. They say that production will be off 25%. Big garden you have here, truck farm?”

“Primarily for our own use with the extra getting sold at the farmer’s market.”

“Is your production low too?”

“Better than one might imagine. Most of the varieties we planted are things they normally plant in southern Canada, maybe 10% less than normal. But we irrigate and that helps. If you will excuse me, I want to check on Dad.”

o

“How is it going?”

“Tolerable. Life seems to go full circle. Started out as a baby eating the same damned food.”

“Any problems?”

“Constipation is all. Becky said it was the morphine. Something about opiates drying out the intestinal tract. How’s your back?”

“Sore and it itches.”

“You were lucky.”

“Becky doesn’t seem to think so. She says that I’m a magnet and attract bullets.”

“Did Jim and Hazel have any trouble getting here?”

“None that I know of.”

“Good. Becky tells me that she’s expecting.”

“So I’ve heard.”

“Is there trouble between the two of you?”

“Just the reserve police officer thing.”

“Then quit, damn it. You’re running enough risk here on the farm without that headache too.”

“What do you mean?”

“I have a lot of free time to listen to the news. Bush pushed that suspension of martial law too damned fast and with the perceived food shortages and high unemployment, a lot of otherwise good people are doing things that they probably wouldn’t do in normal times to feed their families. You talk about magnets. Jim, this farm is the biggest magnet in the area. We have horses, cattle, hogs and chickens plus that huge garden Gene put in. Gene is keeping those grain bins full too, although I don’t know where he’s finding the grain. People have been known to kill for less than food to feed their families. On top of that, Bush has angered a lot of environmentalists over development of the California and Alaskan oil. Mark my words, son, trouble is coming.”

o

“Dad started in on me too.”

“About what?”

“Being a reserve police officer.”

“Good, listen to him.”

“He said we have trouble coming.”

“What kind of trouble? Do you mean in Reno?”

“That wasn’t what he talked about. He said with the food problems and unemployment, the farm was at risk of being attacked. We have 8 cows, 4 heifers and 4 steers, 4 sows 18 gilts and 32 barrows, plus 21 mares, 2 stallions, 11 colts and 10 fillies. I don’t know how much those bins hold, a lot and we have 5. I have no idea how many chickens, a couple of hundred? And the garden is getting close to being harvested.”

“We’ve already started harvesting the garden.”

“In 45 days?”

“Another 10 days or so and we’ll be harvesting green beans.”

This just in, Air Force One was shot down departing Dobbins Air Reserve Base (Atlanta Naval Air Station) Marietta, Georgia just moments ago. Police have detained a California man who admitted firing the missile. We take you live to Dobbins Field.

Aaron, Air Force One had just lifted off and was retracting its landing gear when the missile struck the inside port engine causing the wing to collapse and the aircraft to plow into the ground about ½ miles past the end of the runway. Already on fire, the aircraft exploded on impact. Officials advise that it is unlikely that there are any survivors. Aboard the aircraft were the President and First Lady, their daughters Jenna and Barbara and several members of the media including our own Brian Williams and Bill O’Reilly. If you pan the camera, you can see the extent of the fire. The standard 747-200 aircraft carries 52,410 gallons of jet fuel. This disaster is worse than Dallas in 1963 and the first successful attempt on a President since Ronald Reagan.

Since 1865 the following political leaders have been the subject of assassination attempts:

- Lincoln, Abraham (president of US): Shot April 14, 1865, in Washington, DC, by John Wilkes Booth; died April 15.
- Seward, William H. (secretary of state): Escaped assassination (though injured) April 14, 1865, in Washington, DC, by Lewis Powell (or Paine), accomplice of John Wilkes Booth.
- Garfield, James A. (president of US): Shot July 2, 1881, in Washington, DC, by Charles J. Guiteau; died Sept. 19.
- McKinley, William (president of US): Shot Sept. 6, 1901, in Buffalo by Leon Czolgosz; died Sept. 14.
- Roosevelt, Theodore (ex-president of US): Escaped assassination (though shot) Oct. 14, 1912, in Milwaukee while campaigning for president.

- Cermak, Anton J. (mayor of Chicago): Shot Feb. 15, 1933, in Miami by Giuseppe Zangara, who attempted to assassinate Franklin D. Roosevelt; Cermak died March 6.
- Roosevelt, Franklin D. (president-elect of US): Escaped assassination unhurt Feb. 15, 1933, in Miami.
- Long, Huey P. (US senator from Louisiana): Shot Sept. 8, 1935, in Baton Rouge by Dr. Carl A. Weiss; died Sept. 10.
- Truman, Harry S. (president of US): Escaped assassination unhurt Nov. 1, 1950, in Washington, DC, as 2 Puerto Rican nationalists attempted to shoot their way into Blair House.
- Kennedy, John F. (president of US): Shot Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas, Tex., allegedly by Lee Harvey Oswald; died same day. Injured was Gov. John B. Connally of Texas. Oswald was shot and killed two days later by Jack Ruby.
- Malcolm X, also known as El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (black activist): Shot and killed in a New York City auditorium, Feb. 21, 1965; his killer(s) were never positively identified.
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. (civil rights leader): Shot April 4, 1968, in Memphis by James Earl Ray; died same day.
- Kennedy, Robert F. (US senator from New York): Shot June 5, 1968, in Los Angeles by Sirhan Bishara Sirhan; died June 6.
- Wallace, George C. (governor of Alabama): Shot and critically wounded in assassination attempt May 15, 1972, at Laurel, Md., by Arthur Herman Bremer. Wallace paralyzed from waist down.
- Ford, Gerald R. (president of US): Escaped assassination attempt Sept. 5, 1975, in Sacramento, Calif., by Lynette Alice (Squeaky) Fromme, who pointed but did not fire .45-caliber pistol. Escaped assassination attempt in San Francisco, Calif., Sept. 22, 1975, by Sara Jane Moore, who fired one shot from a .38-caliber pistol that was deflected.
- Jordan, Vernon E., Jr. (civil rights leader): Shot and critically wounded in assassination attempt May 29, 1980, in Fort Wayne, Ind.
- Reagan, Ronald (president of US): Shot in left lung in Washington by John W. Hinckley, Jr., on March 30, 1981; three others also wounded.

We take you back to Dobbins...

“I sort of liked the guy. Now we have Cheney? Out of the frying pan and into the fire.”

“At least Cheney won’t have the same problem Bush had. He can reinstitute martial law and won’t have egg on his face. He can even use the assassination as his excuse. Turn the sound back on.”

Aaron, immediately after his swearing in ceremony President Richard Cheney announced the resumption of martial law and the dust to dawn curfew. The President described the assassin as a member of the fanatical fringe that one so often finds in some of the more liberal states. He has been linked to the Environmental Defense Center. The name has not been released at this time. We go now to the Southern White House and our commentator...

“I figured he was one of those Sea Otter lunatics.”

“At least it wasn’t the Sierra Club, Jim.”

“Not this time, Gene. Maybe next.”

“What are you going to do about your reserve police officer job?”

“I haven’t decided. I keep thinking about baseball, 3 strikes and you’re out. I may take Dad’s advice and make Becky a happy woman. With the resumption of martial law, the RPD probably won’t need as many reserve officers.”

“To tell you the truth, Marilyn has mentioned quitting to me. More than once of course, but lately the number of officers’ deaths has increased to the point that she’s told me to quit or sleep on the couch.”

“And?”

“It’s a pretty cheap couch. My 6’2 frame won’t fit on a love seat.”

“I tried the couch once. Let her out of the shelter and she was still po’d. Does Marilyn use you first, middle and last name when you’re in trouble?”

“Nope. She says ‘goodnight asshole’ and throws me a pillow and blanket.”

“Actually, I prefer the recliner.”

o

The Sheriff told Gene that he couldn’t authorize a civilian, even a reserve Deputy, to buy one of the V-100s. The Assistant Chief of Police told Lance the same thing. Undeterred, Gene bought them anyway, another of Gene’s low friends in high places. The vehicles had been completely reconditioned and had new diesel engines. A few days later a Marine arrived driving a HMMWV and had two boxes for Gene. Each box contained a M2HB produced in 2005 to fulfill the Army contract. The note said, “Get your own ammo big brother; the Army has no idea where these are and it would be nice if you’d keep it that way. There are 3 replacement barrels for each of the guns. No M240s use the M-60s instead.”

“We need 50 cal ammo.”

“Hawthorne? Let me check with Lance, he said some of those Army types are a little anal.”

“We could do it, but it would have to be after hours and I don’t know how we can manage, Gene turned in his badge and can’t get a Sheriff’s patrol car.”

“Don’t you know anyone in the Guard?”

“Lt. Matthews and Master Sergeant Smith. Oh, and a communications Corporal, but I didn’t get his name.”

“We could try the Sergeant. We could show him our new playthings and ask his help in locating some ammo, preferably the mix for the Abrams tanks with 4 AP to 1 APIT.”

“What do we have that he might want?”

“We won’t know until we ask, will we?”

“Remember these from Nam, Owen?”

“Before my time. Airedale’s used them too. What do these have for armament?”

“M-60s and M2HBs check them out.”

“What the hell, these are those new M2HBs General Dynamics built in 2005. Been trying to get some for a while but the Army won’t release any.”

“Ours aren’t any good, we don’t have any ammo.”

“Do you have extra barrels?”

“Three per gun.”

“No chit. How did you come by these?”

“Got them from a Marine.”

“The Corps didn’t get any of these.”

“Nonetheless, we got them from a Marine.”

“I wish I had these and he had a feather up his butt, we’d both be tickled.”

“What’s wrong with the M2 machine guns you have now?”

“Nothing, they’ve been through the depot. Say you don’t suppose...”

“As long as they have 3 replacement barrels and ammo, the tank mix, I think we could work something out.”

“Standard load out on an Abrams is 1,000-rounds of AP/APIT, 4 to 1.”

“Yeah, we know.”

“How much ammo?”

“100-rounds per ammo can? 200 cans and 2 machine guns with 3 spare barrels each. Drop your old stuff off and pick up the replacements.”

“Make it 100 cans and you have a deal.”

“Done.”

“Sorry fellas, I could only get the M1/M2 mix. I got 200 cans though. We still have a deal?”

“What the hell, we need ammo, did you bring the old Ma Deuces?”

“There you go and I even bought tripods, just in case.”

“It’s been nice doing business with the Guard, Sergeant.”

o

“Sorry Chief, too much pressure from the wife. She’s expecting again and with my Dad close to going, I need to say home.”

“Hate to lose you Officer Young. Turn in your radio and badge and get your ID stamped. It’s probably just as well, with the Guard back on duty we were going to have to cut some people’s time anyway. Stop by once in a while.”

“Will the Guard be running rural patrols?”

“You’d have to check with the Sheriff’s office, but I don’t believe that they’re planning to.”

“Pity, we’re on our own then?”

“You have several people on your farm, don’t you?”

“Probably not enough. But we are set up to be able to contract the Guard with our Ham radios.”

“You know the Sheriff’s Department’s frequencies, don’t you?”

“I’m sure that Gene does.”

“Call them too, they’ll have to respond. I’ll mention it to the Sheriff.”

“The Chief said to call the Sheriff or the Guard if we ran into trouble.”

“They are maybe 15 minutes away. We’re on our own here, you know that don’t you?”

“True, but we have our surprises in the barn.”

“Just remember, that armor is only ¼” thick. I doubt it will stop more than a .30 caliber and maybe not even that.”

“What did you put in the V-100s for radios?”

“The VHF business radios, I had 6, remember?”

“Right, 3 in the delivery trucks, 3 spares and a base station. Where did you pull these from?”

“The one from Ted’s pickup and the one from your Dad’s pickup. I think we may need to use 3 delivery trucks until we sell all of the produce from the garden that we’re not keeping.”

“Are we doing well?”

“When I sit and handle the stack of Gold Eagles it reminds me of a scene out of Silas Marner. Yes, Jim, we’ve done very well with bread selling for 3 silver dimes a loaf. In the beginning we were doing almost 1,500 dimes a week and now almost 5,700. I’m making about 5% on the supplies and the ladies are getting about 50% of the selling price. I know that’s divided 7 ways, but it has really added up. Marilyn has her share all rolled up waiting to trade it in for the new coins and those dimes are still worth 1½ old dollar. 800 dimes equals on Gold Eagle.”

o

“Jim, come quick, it’s your Dad.”

“What happened?”

“Becky said that he had a heart attack. The pain was fairly intense and she and the doctor were thinking of starting him on the epidural. I called an ambulance, and the doctor. Both are on their way,” Mandy explained.

John looked ghastly. Becky had him on 10 liters of oxygen and had dissolved the aspirin under his tongue. She was establishing an IV with Ringer’s and then planned a second with normal saline. They hadn’t gotten a defibrillator and didn’t have an EKG, so the stethoscope and the bp cuff were the extent of her diagnostic equipment. By the time

the ambulance arrived, John was in full arrest and she was performing CPR. The Paramedics took over and continued CPR until the doctor arrived about 5 minutes later. Unfortunately, John failed to respond to the treatment and the doctor pronounced him. Glenda fainted and the Paramedics turned their attention to her. Jim and Jeb were numb; they had expected their father to die, but certainly not this soon. When the Paramedics asked which funeral home to notify, they were told 'none'.

"Jim, he was in a lot of pain. Too much stress, possibly. I don't see the need for an autopsy so tell me if you want one and I write up the cause of death as unknown or suspected MI."

"Doc, I don't see the point. Jeb what do you think?"

Jeb shrugged his shoulders. "He's been through enough, hasn't he?"

"The cause of death is Myocardial Infarction. Please stop by the office and I'll have the paperwork prepared for you."

The doctor took the chart that Becky was just finishing up and it went back to his office, more for her protection than his. They bathed John and dressed him in his favorite Church suit. Gene and the others put him in the coffin and it was set up on two saw-horses in the living room. Around 11am the following morning, the pastor came by from the Church and they had a short service and interred John underneath the California black oak at the back of the farm. Two days later, Jeb and Mandy left to return to Kansas. Jim insisted that Jeb take his M1A and John's guns. Jim took Glenda by the doctor's office, picked up the paperwork and they went to the family attorney. Glenda gave him the checkbook, John's will and the death certificate. He told them he'd be in touch. Those are the cold hard facts. There was more than enough grief to go around and it was a family matter, not for public consumption.

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Lance and Janet moved in a few days later, taking over Jeb and Mandy's trailer. Rather amazingly, Glenda was in the bakery the day after they returned from the attorney's office. Something about being grieved out and idle hands. Janet took Mandy's place in the bakery. Despite the surgical rebuilding, Lance's shoulder was determined to be a permanent problem due to some involvement with a joint and his freedom of movement. He was given a medical retirement.

"Got the golden bullet, huh?"

"Damn it, I was close to 20, too. Oh well, I only have a minor loss of motion, just enough to keep me off the force. Are you going to teach me to be a farmer?"

"Do I need to tell what all of the terms are for the various kinds of livestock?"

“Nope, been on a farm a few times. I’m really, really sorry about your father.”

“Thanks, partner. As much as I hate to admit it, maybe its better this way, he avoided a lot of suffering with the cancer. He was in enough pain that they were considering an epidural. And Becky wasn’t too certain how long they could maintain it.”

“Is the farm yours now?”

“Half mine and half Jeb’s. Once we get a valuation, I buy out his half. I’m thinking maybe \$80,000, but it will depend on the appraisal. It doesn’t look like Reno will get this far for several years so I doubt seriously that there will be too much over valuation because of its proximity to the city. The land on either side isn’t for sale either and the lay of the land wouldn’t really lend it to development.”

“Can you raise that kind of money?”

“I can I hope. I had some gold and silver from before the war. Jeb said he’d take payments. Gene is estimating a cost of materials for the garden products and I’m getting that plus we are getting a $\frac{1}{7}$ share of the net proceeds. It is really starting to add up, between the income from the bread and our share of the profits. With Janet working in the bakery you’ll be getting $\frac{1}{7}$ of all of the profits too. I suppose that the best way to describe this operation is a co-op. Gene and I are supplying the raw materials and the ladies much of the labor. Apparently Gene has a large pile of the Gold Eagles and Becky says that we have a growing pile. I’m thinking about selling a portion of those guns now and use the money to pay off Jeb. Now that we’ve gone back to martial law and some reality has set in, I can probably get double what I paid for them.”

“Won’t you need to get a federal gun dealers license?”

“I’m only going to sell one rifle and one revolver at a time as a set and will treat it as a private sale between individuals. I was very careful when I acquired the weapons and none are on the stolen weapons list.”

“What are you going to be asking for a set?”

“2 Gold Eagles for a .45 caliber rifle, revolver, gun belt, holster and 50 rounds of ammo. It should be a seller’s market by now.”

“And you’re not related to Gene?”

“No, but I worked for him for a few years. And, because of the sharp appreciation in the price of gold and silver, I was already way ahead. Might even have enough to pay off Jeb and buy some more equipment for the shelter.”

“What kind of equipment?”

“When Dad died, I realized that we needed a defibrillator. We could also use an EKG. I’m going to ask Becky to make up a list.”

“She’s a doctor?”

“Trauma nurse, with a long time in an ER. I was a Combat Lifesaver in the Army so I can help a little. The ambulance took 15 minutes to get here and the doctor about 20. If Dad was right, this farm will be a magnet and attract the lowlifes or the desperate looking for food. That’s why Gene went ahead with the V-100s even though both the Chief and Sheriff turned you both down. Ever ride a horse?”

“That’s why I know a little something about a farm.”

“Come to the house and get a .45 caliber gun set and we’ll check over the farm.”

“Hey I don’t have 2 ounces of gold.”

“That’s only for the people I’m planning on selling to. Everyone age 15 and up will get a horse, saddle, and a .45 caliber gun set, except they’ll get 2 boxes of ammo. I may end up not having any to sell.”

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“Are you having any complications this time?”

“It’s a little early for them to show up, honey, I’m not into my second trimester.”

“Would having a defibrillator and an EKG have made a difference for Dad?”

“I don’t think so, we knew the cancer was affecting other organs and it may have just stressed him out. Why do you ask?”

“I was discussing medical equipment with Lance. I told him that I’d like to have a defibrillator, EKG machine and other medical equipment for the shelter. The situation seems to be deteriorating around the country and Dad said the farm could end up getting attacked. I’d like you to take some of the silver and get whatever we might need if we were attacked and some of us shot.”

“I’m not a doctor Jim.”

“You’re all we have until we can get a doctor or transport our injured, Becky.”

“I’ll replace some of the supplies that were used up during your father’s illness and check with the hospital and the doctor about their recommendations. The thing that occurs to me is fluid replacement because gunshots usually result in blood loss. Preventing massive shock and replacing the fluids would be my primary concern.”

“We checked Dad’s grave, the grass is beginning to sprout. It’s peaceful out by the tree. How is Mom doing?”

“Hasn’t missed a beat, back at it and our Mom’s took over the canning operation. My mother was talking about canned beef. It was one of her mother’s favorite things. She said it would come in handy for a quick stew if nobody thought to take something out of the freezer. How many cattle are we butchering this winter?”

“Four. I’d talked about processing 5 sides of beef and 11 hogs and selling the rest of it to the Army or whoever is in charge of food.”

“We’ll process all three steers and can some of the roasts. Has Gene gotten a meat grinder yet?”

“If you’re asking, probably not. I wonder who we can get to process the meat?”

“We might be able to hire one of the meat cutters from a grocery store to come out and cut it up. Pay him for his work in meat.”

“I’ll visit with Gene and see what he’s planning on buying and if he knows a meat cutter.”

“Fine, I’ll do the medical stuff.”

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“I know a meat cutter, Jim. I can ask him what we’ll need to process the meat and get whatever he suggests. I’ll also see if he’d be interested in cutting and wrapping the meat and taking payment in kind. It will be past canning season so we can set the equipment up in the second classroom.”

“Have you ever seen any National Guard patrols?”

“The Sheriff told me that the Guard wouldn’t be patrolling the rural areas when I turned in my badge.”

“Maybe we’ll have a really bad winter and we won’t have to worry about anyone attacking the farm.”

“Possibly. I don’t think that I’d count on that as our sole means of protection.”

“We have those V-100s you found. They’ll make a difference.”

“By the time we man those, we’ll have a lot fewer people to defend the perimeter.”

“We can use the teenagers, Gene. Put a girl on the gun and let one of the boys drive the vehicle. They should be safer in a vehicle than a foxhole.”

“We don’t have any foxholes.”

“I was thinking I’d use the backhoe and dig a trench around the housing area. We could put the dirt in some gunnysacks.”

“Might be the right thing to do, but it will be a lot of work.”

“Lance might be able to run the backhoe, he’s still healing. I can organize some of the kids to fill the sandbags. I’ll get some from the fire department or somewhere and we’ll get this all done before winter sets in. Where we cut through the road, I’ll put down one of those used steel road plates. If anyone were to attack, we could always pull it.”

“I was planning on using them to dig the potatoes. It appears that were going to get 15 to 16 tons out of that one-acre field. We’re going to have a lot of spuds to sell. No way we can store all of them in the root cellar, were talking at least 300 100-pound bags.”

What kind of yield did you get on the beans?”

“Not so hot, 900 pounds. I figured we’d just keep all of them because they’ll keep forever. We’d be better off growing potatoes. We’ll grade the potatoes and keep the #2s because we can get more for the #1s. Once a potato is peeled and boiled it won’t make much difference to us.”

“How about the green beans and the other crops?”

“We ran 6 of those Presto pressure cookers on one stove and prepared the vegetables on the other. They did 3 or 4 batches a day so 126 to 168 quarts a day, every other day of green beans and the same the other 3 days on other veggies. Everyone 10 and over was helping snap the beans. We ate some of the salad stuff and sold off the rest. Best year I ever had in business since I started. Not in total sales, but in profits. What are you going to do with your share, endow a hospital wing?”

“Something like that, yes. I have to pay Jeb off for his half of the farm and Becky is checking into medical supplies we might need if we get attacked.”

“You’re really worried about that aren’t you?”

“Dad was and I guess some of that rubbed off on me. Of course 2 shooting incidents in an extremely short career as a reserve police officer might have something to do with it too. I gave Jeb my M1A so all of our firearms are standardized and I don’t have the problem with not having the right magazines. I’ve been counting noses and we have the same number of people now that we had when we first got together. Lance, Janet and their two teens replaced Dad, Jeb, Mandy and David. We have 2 babies, 2 kids under

15, Beth and Davie, plus 8 over 15 and 13 adults. 21 out of 25 people will be able to participate in the defense if we let Beth and Davie watch the twins.”

“Buddy, you’d better start taking something for your stomach before you end up with gastritis like your Dad had. You worry enough for 3 people. But it’s ok; with you worrying, I don’t need to.”

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The food they harvested was quickly disposed of, even though many in Reno had put in their own gardens. They sold the extra steer to the packing plant in Sparks and cut and wrapped 5 sides and 11 hogs. The equivalent of one side, in roasts, was cut up and canned. They processed the hams, picnics and bacon and even ground some of their own sausage. They ended up with ~300 processed chickens and several baking hens. They’d be able to eat through the winter, regardless. So much had changed in the past 10 months, John was dead, Jeb, Mandy and David back in Kansas, Lance and his family here and they had a thriving business. Jim and Lance boasted new scars and a different attitude.

They were allowed to purchase a small allotment of fuel because of their food operations, \$5 a gallon for #2 diesel and propane ran about \$3.50. FEMA used a table that apparently assumed 5.5mpg, like semis got, and they were gaining on fuel because the delivery trucks got closer to 15mpg. The two tanks they’d picked up in Truckee were buried and connected to a used gas pump. Jim couldn’t get over how many of the things they had on the small farm were used. About 99% of everything they acquired had been previously owned.

Becky bought 2 gurneys, one hard and one soft, used, for the clinic. She added a reconditioned EKG, a new defibrillator and a cold storage unit with the capacity to store up to 36 pints of type AB fresh frozen plasma. She added a second 10 liter oxygen concentrator, also used. They also prepared BOB’s for everyone, even the babies, although the contents varied. Universal to all of the BOB’s, excluding the babies, was a first aid kit consisting of Band-Aid’s, one QuikClot ACS+ trauma kit. There was also a Gerber Diesel Multiplier, a refill pack for a survival knife, one 3,600-calorie lifeboat ration, 3 packages of water and a homemade fire starter.

In these post cataclysm days, all of the men on the farm went armed 24/7 and the ladies generally kept a firearm within arm’s reach. Jim figured paranoid beat dead anytime. He took the tractor and plowed the garden, 5 acres for the coming year. With the young people a year older the following year, he was hoping that they could handle that much larger, 20%, of a garden. Gene had eliminated the third delivery truck at the end of the growing season and they only took ground grains in twice a week. Everyone need a break, it had been 10 months of backbreaking work to get the group to where they were.

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Cleanup efforts have been discontinued in the northern cities but continue in California and Texas. Refineries continue to process home heating oil in an effort to supply customers in the northern tier of states. With supplies described as 'almost adequate' efforts are now focusing on producing more diesel fuel to alleviate shortages and improve the distribution of food.

Although this year's farm production was off an estimated 30%, adequate supplies exist to feed the population through the winter and well into next summer. The principal difficulty has been in distribution. Typically, food is trucked to concentration points, shipped by rail and redistributed, again by truck. The shortage of #2 diesel fuel continues to plague distribution.

In other news, fighting continues in the Middle East. Palestinian militants exploded 3 suicide bombs in Israel. Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and West Bank was completed in the fall of 2005. Israel has threatened to drop bombs on the Palestinian camps if the bombing doesn't halt. Tehran announced that it had completed equipping their missiles with nuclear warheads and warned the Israelis that bombing the Palestinian camps would evoke a response from that country that would make Israeli government rue the day they dropped the first bomb. Tel-Aviv had no response.

In Europe, the uneasy truce between Germany and France continues. Last year, France invaded German territory resulting in Germany seizing the country and replacing the government. France continues with a massive buildup of its armor forces, now fielding in excess of 2,000 of their Leclerc main battle tanks and 3,000 of the AMX-30 medium tanks. Germany has responded to the French buildup by producing 2,000 of the new Leopard 3 main battle tank. The German tank features the new smoothbore 140mm, 55 caliber cannon replacing the 120mm L55 smoothbore tank gun on the Leopard 2 and the 3rd generation Chobham armor.

In order to secure the 3rd generation armor, Germany supplied the United Kingdom with the newer 140mm cannon. This makes both the upgraded British Challenger II German Leopard III the most lethal and best-protected main battle tanks in the world today. President Cheney announced that the US was negotiating with both Germany and the United Kingdom for possible licensing rights to allow production of a newer Abrams III, which would equal or surpass the German and British tanks.

"I thought that we were slowly reducing the number of main battle tanks and moving to a more mobile force."

"Becky, I'm guessing that with both the British and Germans fielding newer generation main battle tanks, the US is left with no alternative except to maintain parity. With Detroit nuked, I don't know where they're going to build them. Maybe one of the other auto plants will take over production, like one of the plants in Mississippi or Alabama, for example."

“The Russians have been missing in action. I don’t believe I’ve heard a word on the news about them since right after the war. And I don’t believe we ever heard any casualty figures from them either.”

“True, but Europe seems to be on the cusp of a war and if Iran even looks like they’ll carry through with their threat, Israel will nuke them into the Stone Age.”

“Like they aren’t? Even making allowance for cultural and religious differences, the way they treat their women leaves a lot to be desired. If you even looked like you were going to behave that way towards me, I’d hand you your balls on a plate.”

“Is that any way for a lady to talk?”

“Do you want some rifle lessons? Daddy taught me some, hon.”

“This subject has been brought up before. No thank you. Practice them for the mutant zombie biker hordes that will be attacking us this year.”

“I really hope not. I calculated my due date, it’s in April.”

“Are they going to do an ultrasound?”

“Probably not unless I have a problem again.”

“No twins this time?”

“The odds of 2 sets of fraternal twins are 1:3,000, 1 set of identical twins and one set of fraternal twins, 1:10,000 and 2 sets of identical twins, 1:70,000. One child at a time, please. What are you digging that trench for?”

“Farm defense. An adaptation of the WW I trench concept. With a trench fully enclosing the home and buildings, we can fight from protected positions.”

“Every time you get one of these brainstorms we end up reaping what you sow. You build a bomb shelter and the Chinese attacked. You became a cop and were involved in 2 gunfights in 3 months. If we have a trench, we’ll be attacked for sure.”

“Right track wrong train beautiful. The bomb shelter saved our lives; the vest and my quick reactions kept me from getting killed; and, we’ll get attacked whether we have the trench or not. At least with the trench we’ll have a fighting chance.”

“And all because your Dad said so?”

“If you want to put it that way, in the greater part yes. You recall that despite your protests, I didn’t decide to turn in my badge. But he inadvertently reminded me of my family responsibilities. I was able to do what you wanted because of his explanation of why I

should. Jack Webb once made a speech on Dragnet. He was responding to someone's remark about how police departments tend to pull out all of the stops when an officer gets killed. He asked if a trained, armed police officer wasn't safe on the streets, then how safe was the public? Lance and I weren't safe so the farm wasn't either. John Hedges was afraid to act like a cop instead of a politician. He's dead."

"Sometimes you don't play fair."

"Sorry about that, but you asked. Are we all squared away on medical supplies?"

"Yes, honey, I even bought 12 500ml bags of frozen plasma, a freezer and a thawing machine. Under the new protocols, the FFP is good for up to 2 years if kept frozen. Once it's thawed, it must be used or disposed of in 24 hours. I planned to add a bag a month so we wouldn't be discarding a lot all at once. It isn't cheap."

"You're getting that glow again, you know."

"It's probably the hormones. I'll take a shower, how about a back rub?"

"I can start there, sure."

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"We might be well advised to begin posting a guard, Jim. I heard that a farm was attacked and everyone killed."

"Where was that?"

"Across the line in California. We can fire up the V-100s and position them to protect the front of the property. We're going to need some way to wake everyone if trouble arises. I was thinking about installing those power horn security alarms like they sell at Radio Shack."

"That would work, they'll wake the dead. Where are we going to watch from?"

"I haven't decided. It should be elevated and considering how chilly it's getting at night, heated. It has to afford a 360° view of the property, too, possibly a Sky Watch or an Ugly Hut. They're both portable towers and the Ugly Hut is very affordable. We could add the Yaesu FT-817 and a Motorola business radio. The quicker we call the authorities, the quicker they'll arrive."

"You seem to have it all figured out Gene, where would you get an Ugly Hut?"

"There's a used one at a rental place in Reno, I told the guy not to sell it to anyone else until he heard from me. All we'll need to do is set it up, run a heavy duty extension cord and add the radios and antennas and the alarm circuit."

“There’s a 100’ 10/3 extension cord in the barn. You get the hut and the alarm horns and we’ll start pulling the radios from the vehicles and pull wires for the horns to the homes.”

“Jeez, that worked too well, it woke the babies. We need to add a kill switch; I had to yank a wire off to shut the damned thing off.”

“Do you have more light switches and boxes?”

“In the barn.”

“We can add those, but we’ll have to label the switch positions so they’re always in the on position. I labeled the switch in the hut, standby and alarm. We can label the ones in the homes, on and off.”

“Have you figured out a Standard Operating Procedure?”

“I think so. If the observer sees approaching vehicle or foot traffic, they can activate the alarm, call the National Guard first and the Sheriff second. I figure the Sheriff will respond faster than the Guard.”

“We’d better put a phone in the guard shack too. There is no sense changing the radio frequency to call the Sheriff. 911 will be just as fast.”

“I thought the Guard established a fast react team.”

“They did, but how fast is fast? It would take them 10 minutes to get the chopper warmed up and possibly as long as 10 minutes to get here, assuming they can find the place.”

“We need a flashing beacon on top of something, how about on top of the Ugly Hut.”

“Don’t tell me; look in the barn for a flashing red beacon, right?”

“Yellow. It’s a 12-volt slow moving vehicle flasher.”

“Don’t you throw anything away?”

“Not if it has any possible value, no.”

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“So where do you get all of the grain?”

“Out of my Rolodex. A few years back, I thought about packaging my own line of bulk generic products. The first thing I did was lineup suppliers. I was going to sell 6-gallon pails of survival foods. You know wheat, rice, beans and so forth. Hadn’t considered the permits I’d need to process food and dropped the idea. Anyway, it’s not that far from Walton Feed in Idaho and I didn’t think that I could compete with their prices. They apparently bought the stuff in larger quantities than I was planning on buying. What we’re doing now is better anyway; most people don’t have a grain grinder. By the way, we quit grinding oats. Once we had the roller mill, no one wanted Scottish oatmeal. We also added a new item, corn meal muffin mix.”

“Where is Walton Feed located?”

“Southeast corner of the state. Pretty much a straight shot from Salt Lake City. You take I-15 north to US 89 and it goes right to Montpelier. In the spring, I’ll add another grain bin and we’ll start making pasta. I’ve got a line on a used restaurant pasta extruder and separate roller. And, Marilyn has a really good recipe for pasta sauce so we may start canning that too. I’ll have to plant more tomatoes and put in another pair of stoves, but we can expand the business.”

“You’re going to need another classroom.”

“I’ve got one lined up, but that will wait until spring. I thought we’d move the grinding and pasta operation to the new building so we’ll have room for the additional stoves. I’m still looking for a commercial pasta dryer, but you know me, I’ll find one.”

“Find us some more of the FAL rifles and magazines.”

“I’m not sure about the rifles, but 200 of the magazines won’t be hard to get.”

“That should be enough magazines.”

“I’ll get those tomorrow, there are some things a man can’t have too many off. I figured most of the ladies could handle a FAL if Becky had one. We have 14 of the rifles and only 13 adults. However, I might be able to pick up 3 or 4 rifles.”

“Don’t pay extra to get them, but we aren’t short of 7.62x51mm ammo, only the 5.56x45mm.”

“I can always get 5.56x45mm ammo, how much do you want?”

“I don’t think we’ll need 108 cases, but if it’s not hard to get, you could pick up a few cases, say maybe 10. Now, if you could get some 30-round M16 magazines that might not hurt.”

“Is Lake City SS109 loose packed ammo ok?”

“Yes.”

“While I’m at it, I’m going to get some ProMag magazine loaders. Whoever is watching the babies can load magazines for us. They’re slick, you just put them over the top of the magazine; drop in the loose rounds and push. And they’re cheap enough that if we don’t like them we aren’t out much.”

“It is fair to say that you agree with me?”

“Whether I agree with you or not, waiting to make up my mind until whomever is shooting at us is doing it backwards. What are the odds that I could ever shoot up 108 cases of 7.62x51mm ammo? Still with all of the practice and everything, we’re down to the mid ‘80s. It will take 10 cases just to load all of the magazines.”

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Gene acquired 4 more of the FAL rifles, bringing their total to 18. With 419 FAL magazines, they had 23 per rifle. There were 5 M16s, 1 A4 and 4 A3s. M16 magazines cost about 4 times as much as the FAL magazines and were harder to find. He only bought 30 of those. He simply couldn’t understand why people would want to go to war with a .22. They’d be ok for the teenage girls, but even they could probably handle a FAL rifle.

“It’s starting to snow.”

“Already? It’s only September 24th. Going to be a long cold winter, Becky. I have to get tarps and cover the trench. Be back in a few hours.”

“How long is the trench? Do you have enough tarps? This is a heck of time to think of that, why didn’t you do it earlier? Dress warm, you catch your death of cold. Why don’t you get some of the other guys to hel...”

“Give you a hand?”

“Thanks Abel. I’m more or less prepared for this; I made up some rolls of canvas tarp 10’ wide and about 100’ long. I sort of figured it would start to snow about bedtime one of these nights although I didn’t think we’d see snow before October.”

“Can we help?” Gene asked. “Got another one of those rolls?”